

Queen's speech keeps election options open

Defiant Thatcher rallies her party

By ROBIN OAKLEY
POLITICAL EDITOR

THE prime minister yesterday rallied Conservative MPs with a confident Commons performance in which she played down policy differences between herself and Sir Geoffrey Howe and signalled her determination to fight for her own vision of the European Community.

Mrs Thatcher brushed off speculation about a possible leadership challenge which persisted at Westminster in spite of Michael Heseltine's apparent withdrawal from any contest.

With no sign of a stalking-horse challenger emerging, Tory MPs felt Mrs Thatcher had strengthened her position with a battling performance in which she outscored Neil Kinnock, the Labour leader.

Mrs Thatcher spoke openly of her regret at Sir Geoffrey's departure after "long and distinguished service". But she was unapologetic about her language at the Rome summit that precipitated her former deputy's resignation.

She quoted Luxembourg's foreign minister as declaring it was a "useless summit" and she said: "Let no one make the mistake of believing that what emerged from the Rome European Council was a fully



worked-out strategy. It was just dates and deadlines." Speaking in the debate on the Queen's speech, Mrs Thatcher underlined her determination to preserve Britain's national currency and to prevent any further erosion of the sovereignty of the British Parliament. "You don't secure the sort of Europe we want by a policy of always going along with what others propose, simply for fear of being left out," she said, adding: "There could be no question of giving up our pound sterling unless and until parliament and people of the time so decided", a hint that a possible referendum is part of her thinking.

But Mrs Thatcher stuck much more to the language of her official statement on the Rome summit than the more extravagant responses to questions that had followed last week. She emphasised Britain's willingness to play a full part in European monetary arrangements and expressed her belief that the inter-governmental conference negotiations on EMU would enable the community to go forward as twelve.

Mrs Thatcher, who was greeted by cheering Tory MPs, dominated a noisy and obstreperous Commons far more effectively than Mr Kinnock, who charged her with being unfit to lead Britain in Europe.

Mr Kinnock, handicapped by constant calls from Tories to say what Labour's precise position was on the single currency, was reckoned by MPs to have failed to make the best of a situation when he should have had Mrs Thatcher against the ropes. Brilliant in congratulating the earlier backbench speakers, Mr Kinnock allowed his attack to dissipate in the face of Tory barracking.

He attacked Mrs Thatcher for failing to live up to her expressed desire for an "open classless society", but wasted some of his ammunition on Michael Heseltine, saying: "Those who snipe at the prime minister publicly but then cast around for surrogates and stalking horses deserve much the same disdain, especially

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harsher penalties for drunken and dangerous driving, and a highways bill will encourage the building and operation of privately financed toll roads. Public utilities such as gas, water and electricity boards will be forced to make their holes in the road for essential works at the same time.

A trust ports bill will permit their privatisation without the need for individual bills, and a Severn bridges bill will provide for a second crossing of the river.

The second major theme will be the fight against crime. A new criminal justice bill will attempt to relate the severity of sentences more closely to the seriousness of crimes, and will reform parole arrangements so that the sentence served is closer to that passed. The courts will be given increased powers to make parents take greater responsibility for offences committed by their children.

The government's third chosen theme is that of the family, with bills to set up the child support agency to ensure that absent parents contribute to the maintenance of their offspring and to allow for the attachment of earnings to ensure payments are made.

The War Crimes Bill defeated in the Lords in June is to be reintroduced. If this is again rejected by peers, ministers intend to use Parliament Act powers to force it through.

Bush savours California plum

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER AND PETER STOTHARD
IN WASHINGTON

THE Republicans yesterday won the biggest prize of the 1990 US election when they narrowly held the governorship of California. Pete Wilson, the Republican senator, beat Dianne Feinstein, the former mayor of San Francisco, with a majority of fewer than 150,000 out of more than six million votes.

The victory compensated President Bush for results that diminished Republican hopes of regaining control of the Senate in 1992 and of the House later this decade. They will make it harder for Mr Bush to pursue his agenda without the support of congressional Democrats.

The Democrats emerged with a significantly strengthened hold on Congress, increasing their Senate majority by one and their House majority by nine or 10. Despite heavy campaigning by



Red Square scuffle: KGB security agents arresting a man who fired a hunting rifle during celebrations in Moscow yesterday

Man held after Red Square shots

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY
IN MOSCOW

TWO shots fired from a hunting rifle in Moscow and violent scuffles in Leningrad and Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, marred an otherwise peaceful day of demonstrations across the Soviet Union to commemorate the 73rd anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution.

The occasion offered an example of adroit political

management by the Soviet leader and justified his gamble in ordering the traditional 'parade' to proceed, despite strong opposition and fear of disturbances.

In Moscow, the shots were heard across Red Square from the leaders' podium to the vanguard of a vast civilian demonstration, led by Communist party members and factory workers. Afterwards, the official Soviet news agency

Tass said a man from Leningrad, aged 39, had been arrested after shooting into the air from a sawn-off hunting rifle. Soviet video film supplied to Tass showed a man, wearing blue trousers and a white shirt, being felled by about a dozen KGB men.

In a recording of the live television coverage shown in the evening, the shots were clearly audible and the prime minister, Nikolai Ryzhkov,

and the head of the Moscow Communist Party, Yuri Prokofyev, were seen to flinch before resuming their stilled and waves to the crowd. The incident created no stir and was disregarded on the official stand, to which Mr Gorbachev and members of the leadership had returned after laying flowers at Lenin's tomb.

Ukrainian parade, page 12
Moscow photograph, page 12

INSIDE
Indian prime minister quits

The Indian prime minister, V P Singh, tendered his resignation last night, ending 11 turbulent months in office after he was defeated heavily in a vote of confidence in parliament in Delhi. It is not clear who will succeed him.

Mr Singh was defeated by 346 votes to 142. Page 28
Muslims fearful, page 14

A 'just war'

Limited military action in the Gulf would be morally justified, the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Hume, says, if all other avenues had failed and if there were prospect of achieving just objectives without damage out of all proportion. Letters, page 18

£2.7bn for beds

More than £2.7 billion is needed to avoid hospital bed closures which mean that 82,000 patients on waiting lists were not treated this year, a survey says. Page 7

Hirohito's fear

A transcript of a 1946 interview with Hirohito, the late emperor of Japan, discloses that he failed to oppose the military's plan to attack Pearl Harbour in 1941 because he feared civil war as the alternative. Page 14

Sainsburys up

J Sainsbury, Britain's top supermarket group, reported interim results much better than the highest City forecast, up 27.1 per cent to £273.4 million on sales up 15 per cent at £4.23 billion. Page 29
Tempus, page 31

Hearts go out

Heart of Midlothian were beaten 3-0 by Bologna in Italy to go out of the UEFA Cup. Aberdeen, defeated 1-0 by Legia Warsaw in Poland, went out of the Cup Winners' Cup. Page 42

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Iraq frees more hostages

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA, ANDREW McEWEEN AND ROBIN OAKLEY IN LONDON

IRAQ increased the rate of release of hostages yesterday as James Baker, the American Secretary of State, arrived in Moscow on the most important stage of his tour of Middle Eastern and European capitals.

Whether Mr Baker's tour is a prelude to war is not yet clear, but Margaret Thatcher reinforced that view yesterday by saying that President Saddam Hussein's time was running out. The prime minister told the Commons that if the Iraqi leader did not leave Kuwait soon allied forces would drive him out.

President Saddam ordered the release of 120 Westerners, including some Britons, in response to a visit by Willy Brandt, the former West Ger-

man chancellor. An announcement to that effect came soon after Yasuhiro Nakasone, the former Japanese prime minister, left Baghdad with 74 Japanese men who were freed on Tuesday. At the same time the Soviet embassy in Moscow announced that a thousand Soviet nationals would be able to leave Iraq from Sunday.

The Iraqi moves probably reflect a belief that Mr Baker's tour is aimed at discovering how other governments would view a military strike. He returns to Washington on Saturday after talks with President Gorbachev today and visits to London and Paris.

With the US mid-term elections over, President Bush will want to know whether the

Soviet Union and China would abstain from criticism in the event of an attack. The White House said yesterday that Mr Bush would probably meet Mr Gorbachev in Paris during the 34-nation summit of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe which begins on November 19.

Herr Brandt, who obtained a promise of the release of a hundred Germans and twenty people of other nationalities, showed no optimism after a two-hour meeting with the Continued on page 28, col 4

French deal, page 16
Letters, page 17

Arson puts disaster movies in the shade

FROM SAM KILEY IN LOS ANGELES



Beatty: a mystery fit for Dick Tracy to solve

HOLLYWOOD was yesterday buzzing with rumours and conspiracy theories after a fire at Universal Studios which caused millions of dollars damage to historic film sets and sent the studio's share price tumbling on Wall Street.

Michael Huston, aged 40, a security guard, was arrested later on charges of suspected arson, said the Los Angeles County Sheriff's department. "He was on duty when the fire started and after questioning he was arrested early today at the studio. We won't disclose a possible motive," Mr Huston had been in his job for a month.

The fire began in an alleyway known as Brownstone Street, which was tailor-made to be the scene of thousands of

movie muggings, drug deals and murders. The real-life crime destroyed a fifth of the studio's sets, and Tinseltown is pointing the finger at the Japanese, who are bitterly resented since the Sony Corporation bought Columbia Pictures for \$6.7 billion (£3.4 billion) earlier this year. MCA/Universal is the subject of an \$8 billion takeover bid by the Japanese electronics giant, Panasonic, and as news of the fire reached New York and the film studio's share price took a dive on Wall Street, some insiders said the company might be bought on the cheap in the biggest fire-sale in history.

Four hundred firemen and half a dozen helicopters fought to control the fire, which was fuelled by gale-force winds. Investigators confirmed that the

blaze was started deliberately and the famous New York Street set, where Warren Beatty's *Dick Tracy* was shot, had been destroyed along with the *Ben Hur* set. The Courthouse Square, most recently the scene of Michael J Fox's skateboard chase in *Back to the Future II*, survived.

The studio, called Universal City, is the biggest and oldest in Los Angeles with one of the largest filmstocks in the world, including original prints of *ET* and thrillers such as *Jaws* and *Hitchcock's Psycho*.

The conspiracy theory should, however, be taken with a pinch of salt. No potential buyer would risk losing the master copies of hundreds of films just to depress the studio's share price.

Marsh is cleared of murder attempt

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

TERRY Marsh, the former fighting fireman, was acquitted of the attempted murder of Frank Warren, his manager, by a jury at the Central Criminal Court yesterday.

The jury decided that Mr Marsh, aged 32, who briefly held the world light welterweight title in 1987 before retiring from the ring with epilepsy, was not the hooded gunman who shot Mr Warren in London's East End on November 30 last year.

After the 11-day trial he left the court for a celebration and reunion with his family in Basildon, Essex, saying the verdict was "marvellous".

A crowd of several hundred well-wishers lined the court to await his release but he escaped through the judges' entrance with a coat over his head and was driven away at speed by friends.

Mr Marsh was bailed to appear in court again today to face a second charge, of illegally possessing ammunition, which had been removed from which had been removed from the indictment at the start of his trial. The prosecution told Mr Justice Fennell, however, that they would decide overnight whether to proceed.

It is understood that Mr Marsh is considering suing the police for wrongful arrest. The jury rejected the Crown's case that a forthcoming libel action brought by Mr Warren, aged 38, threatened Mr Marsh with public humiliation and financial ruin if he lost and served as a motive for the shooting.

The High Court action was brought after Mr Marsh allegedly implied that his manager knew that he had epilepsy when he got him to sign a contract to defend his world title.

Vote is linked to poll tax register

By DOUGLAS BROOM, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

PEOPLE who refuse to register for the poll tax may lose their right to vote under guidelines issued by the Home Office.

A circular to electoral registration officers says that the names of people who fail to return voter registration forms should be removed from the electoral roll if their name does not appear on the poll tax register.

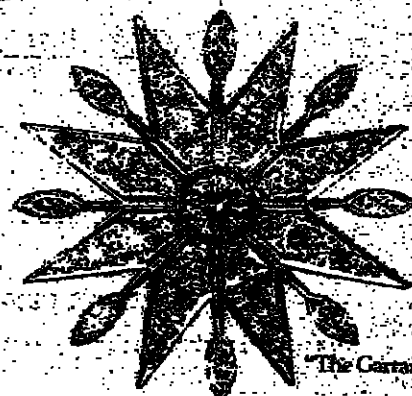
By linking the franchise to the community charge the guidelines appear to undermine attempts by ministers and local authorities to reassure electors that the right to vote does not depend on payment of the poll tax.

Twelve months ago elec-

torial registration officers reported a sharp decline in the number of people registering to vote, because they feared that, by doing so, they would add their names unwittingly to poll tax lists. This year electoral registration campaigns emphasised that electoral registration is in no way connected with the community charge.

The circular also recommends the ending of the practice of allowing up to three years' grace to those who fail to return registration forms. Up to now names have been carried forward from year to year even if no

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EXHIBITION
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Tory MPs worried but against a challenge

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND NICHOLAS WOOD

OPINION among Conservative MPs appears to have hardened against the idea of a challenge to the prime minister this month.

They seem convinced of at least one thing: that Michael Heseltine had badly damaged his short-term leadership prospects by his reaction to Sir Geoffrey Howe's resignation. Even some of those who have seen Mr Heseltine as the only credible challenger feel the rebuke he suffered from his constituency association over his thinly veiled attack on the prime minister has scuppered his hopes for the time being.

A survey by *The Times* of Tory backbenchers failed yesterday to discover the stalking-horse that gossip suggests is waiting in the wings. Only one backbencher claimed to know the identity of a mystery contender, although others floated names of likely challengers.

Backbenchers, without exception, were deeply concerned about the state of the party. Many are unhappy

about the prime minister's leadership and some say that if there were a painless way of removing her, the Tories would fight the next election under a new leader. Older MPs were hankering for the days when party grandees quietly told leaders that their time was up. The majority seem to believe that any attempt to replace Mrs Thatcher would fail and the fallout from any serious contest would further damage their chances of re-election.

A handful of approaches have been made to the friends of Sir Geoffrey urging him to stand. Sir Geoffrey has given every indication that he will not do so. Mr Heseltine has also ruled himself out, although there were still those yesterday who said they would attempt to persuade him that if he did not run this year his chance might be gone forever. His supporters cling to the hope that more bad news for Mrs Thatcher from the by-elections could sway him.

One of the harshest on-the-



Traveller's return: Mr Heseltine arriving back in the country from the Middle East yesterday

record comments came yesterday from Gerald Howarth, MP for Cannock, who said: "Tarzan has ruled himself out but we cannot be sure what the apes will do."

MPs gave varying reasons why a contest at this time was inappropriate. Timothy Raison, MP for Aylesbury, felt that the closeness of key decisions on the Gulf militated against a challenge. There is also still a substantial group of loyalists who regard

Mrs Thatcher's record and experience as an asset.

Many MPs were getting warnings from their constituencies of Mrs Thatcher's deep unpopularity. Their response had been either to reassure the faithful that all would be well, or to tell them that the alternative of a bloody leadership contest was worse.

Several backbenchers hope that Mrs Thatcher will go quietly before the election. A minister said: "My association

tells me we cannot win with her. If she tries to fight a Union Jack election on Europe the party will not go along with it. I will say in my election address that I favour a single currency."

He and another former minister saw a role for "the men in grey suits" if May's local elections went badly.

Another backbencher said: "My association wants her out. I want her out. But I just do not see any scenario for

removing her." Another former minister said: "I think we have a chance with someone else, but I suspect we will go over the cliff with her."

Meanwhile, Kenneth Baker, the party chairman, yesterday denied that a bad result in the Bradford North by-election would increase jitters among backbenchers. He said: "I think a leadership election unnecessary and unwarranted." He said Mr Heseltine's letter was unwise and ill-advised.

Low turnout as Irish vote for a new president

FROM EDWARD GORMAN IN VIRGINIA, CO CAVAN

AN EXTREMELY close result was being predicted in the Irish presidential race as voters went to the polls yesterday at the end of a particularly acrimonious and hard-fought election campaign.

The two leading candidates, Brian Lenihan, of Fianna Fail, and Mary Robinson, the independent, were shown by eve-of-election surveys to be neck-and-neck on 43 per cent. Austin Currie, of Fine Gael, was trailing at 14 per cent.

Mr Lenihan's chances will depend on whether he can poll significantly more first preference votes under the proportional representation system than Mrs Robinson. If, as expected, neither makes the quota for an outright victory on the first count by attracting 51 per cent or more of first preference votes, Mrs Robinson is expected to gain ground in the second count, when Mr Currie's second preferences will be distributed.

Reports from around the country suggested that the turnout was about 60 per cent, significantly lower than in general elections. Early voting was said to be sluggish in many parts of the country. With counting beginning this morning the result is not expected before tomorrow, although the trend should start to emerge by this lunch time.

Poll ratings over the past three weeks have been subjected to unprecedented swings, skewed by the "Dubingate" affair. In Virginia, however, as in many traditional and conservative-minded rural communities in Ireland, "Dubingate", which led to the resignation of Mr Lenihan as deputy prime minister, has made only a marginal impact on voting patterns.

Virginia is an attractive and prosperous village on the shores of Lough Ramore, a noted fishing lake. It is part of the Cavan-Monaghan constituency that returned three Fianna Fail deputies, including two cabinet ministers and two for Fine Gael at the last election. Local pundits discussing the election over a pint at lunchtime in one of the village's 10 bars, agreed that Fianna Fail voters would stick to their man, in spite of allegations that he lied during the campaign.

As one put it: "The Fianna Fail candidate would have to be selling condoms out of the back of his car to change people's minds about him." It is a view underpinned by what seems to be an accepted fact in Irish politics - that people expect their leaders to behave in an unscrupulous manner, but they would prefer them not to get caught doing it.

In this part of the country voters are loyal to their party and its leaders. The division between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, roughly 60-40 in favour of the former, makes for little support for Mrs Robinson, backed by the Irish Labour party and the Marxist Workers' party.

Jaguar workers fear job changes

By CRAIG SETON

SUSPICION over radical changes in working practices appears to be at the heart of discontent among Jaguar car workers who voted yesterday on the company's pay and conditions offer that would increase wages by 12.5 per cent in the first year and by 7 per cent, or the rate of inflation, in the second.

Doubts about demands for more versatile working to increase production were apparent amid general satisfaction over the pay element of the deal, among Jaguar workers at the Browns Lane assembly plant in Coventry, but few of those prepared to comment predicted that the offer would be rejected.

The result of voting by Jaguar's 9,000 hourly paid workers at three plants in the West Midlands is expected today or tomorrow. The above-inflation offer for the first year would raise average weekly pay for production workers from £230 to £258 but 4 per cent would be conditional on the implementation of new work practices by February.

Flexible working is intended to end the system where some production workers do nothing after completing a fixed quota of work. Under the deal they would be expected to work until the end of their shift. Flexible break periods would be introduced and demarcation lines based on skills would end.

Management has explained the ramifications of the proposed changes in work practices to the workforce as the company strives to treble production to 150,000 cars a year, but it has refused to publicly disclose full details of the proposals for more productive shifts. Assembly line workers at Browns Lane said they had been given a "free vote" without union pressure to vote either way.

Pilots form European super union

British airline pilots will today lead the formation of the first European super union to represent workers across the borders of the common market (Kevin Eason writes).

Although the emphasis of the European Community's progress towards the 1992 single market has been directed at business, pilots are the first employee group to recognise that their interests will also have to be defended across all 12 nations. Leaders of airline unions from each of the countries will decide the legal structure of the new organization, the Euro Cockpit Association, which will have 20,000 members.

The 5,000-member British Airline Pilots' Association is the biggest single force in the organization. Roger Mulberge, Balsa chairman, will head the new group until elections are held.

Policman fined

A police sergeant who was in charge of the control room at Taunton on April 9 and failed to react to a telephone call from a boy, aged six, whose mother had been shot was fined £500 and reprimanded yesterday after being found guilty of misconduct. The boy and the policeman have not been named.

Murder charges

Newcastle upon Tyne police last night charged two men with the murder of John Welch, aged 46, a businessman from Lincoln, who died of head injuries in a hotel in 1980. Jonathan Wheldon, aged 43, of South Wales, and Anthony Loveridge, aged 52, of Gloucester, are expected to appear in court today.

Nuclear orders

British Nuclear Fuels' new Thorp reprocessing plant at Sellafield has won orders worth £6,000 million before it even starts operations, the company announced yesterday. It denied claims that it was forced into releasing the details after environmental groups claimed that Thorp would make huge losses.

Pit closure

The Bettws pit at Ammanford, in Dyfed, south Wales, is to close by next March with the loss of 280 jobs. British Coal blamed severe geological difficulties.

By the Times reported
Austria Sch 32; Belgium 4; France 45; Germany 50; Italy 50; Japan 50; Netherlands 50; Portugal 50; Spain 50; Sweden 50; Switzerland 50; United Kingdom 50; United States 50; West Germany 50; Yugoslavia 50; Zaire 50; Zimbabwe 50.

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We've got everyone talking

Travel agents accused of poor complaints record

FROM HARVEY ELLIOTT IN BUDAPEST

TRAVEL agents were accused last night of failing to deal properly with the complaints of 400,000 dissatisfied holiday-makers last year, leaving them frustrated and angry.

Eight per cent of the almost 10 million Britons who took a package holiday last summer were dissatisfied, according to a Mori survey. Although the figure has fallen from the 12 per cent of the previous summer it still represents about 650,000 people, of whom a third said that their holidays had been ruined.

About 450,000 made a formal complaint and only

50,000—or 16 per cent—were satisfied with the response from their travel agent or tour operator. The remaining 400,000 were dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint and the way it was handled.

Bob Worcester, chairman of Mori, told the convention of the Association of British Travel Agents in Budapest: "There is a lot of work to be done in trying to find a way of improving the way in which their complaints are handled. You are not even hearing from a lot of your dissatisfied customers, who will probably

vote with their feet and not come back."

His findings shocked many of the delegates. Tour operators immediately began blaming travel agents, who in turn blamed the tour operators.

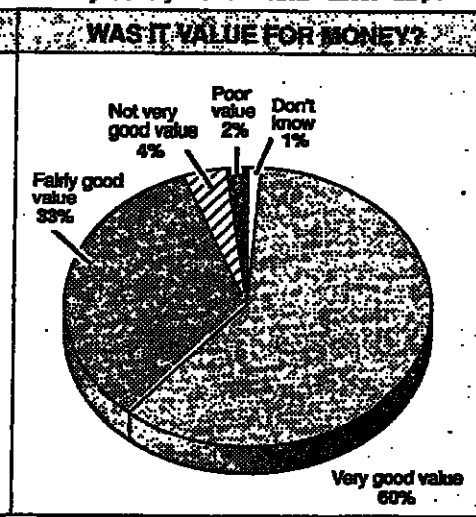
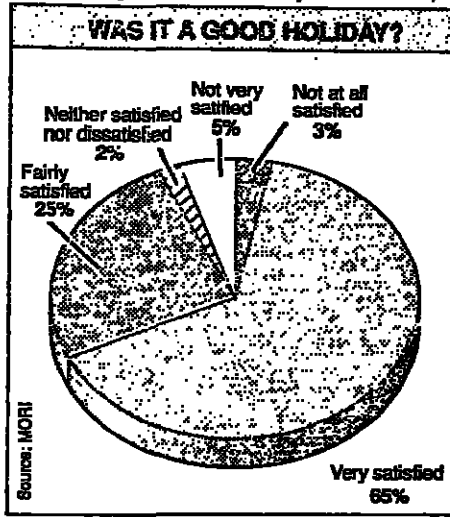
Harry Goodman, chairman of Britain's second biggest holiday group, ILG, said that travel agents often sold the wrong holiday to the wrong client and that large multiple travel agencies were the worst offenders. "The main danger is with inexperienced young staff selling people what is often their most important

purchase of the year," he said.

Ian Smith, managing director of Luan Poly, blamed the tour operators, however, for asking agents to sell poor quality holidays. He warned them that he would take their brochures from the shelves if standards dropped. "There is no point in our spending millions on marketing to get customers through the door and then treating them so badly that they don't come back again," he said.

The travel agents' association is considering employing an industry-wide ombudsman to deal with dissatisfied complainants. A detailed survey has been carried out into the proposal and an announcement about who will fill the role is expected early in the new year. The association's officials want to avoid excessive bureaucracy and are refining plans to ensure that complaints can be dealt with within a month.

The Mori survey, which was conducted in August and September among nearly 1,000 people from throughout the country, showed that 65 per cent of package holiday-makers last year were very satisfied. 25 per cent fairly satisfied, 5 per cent not very satisfied and 3 per cent not at all satisfied with the holidays they had bought.



Woman appointed to run airline

By OUR AIR CORRESPONDENT

CALEDONIAN Airways has appointed a new managing director and the first woman to run an airline in Britain.

Clare Hollingsworth, aged 30, joined British Airways as a trainee aged 18. She returned from maternity leave after the birth of her son to be told that she was to become responsible for running Caledonian Airways, the Gatwick-based British Airways charter sub-

sidary. The airline's staff still wear the familiar tartan uniform of the now defunct British Caledonian, one of Britain's leading charter airlines.

Mrs Hollingsworth takes over next month as part of a shake-up in British Airways' senior management structure and she will be responsible for developing the airline, which last year flew more than one million package holiday makers to resorts throughout the world.

She said yesterday at the annual convention of the Association of British Travel Agents in Budapest: "I was both surprised and delighted. I was in at the beginning of Caledonian and I am determined that it will become the best charter airline in Britain."

The airline, which made a profit of more than £10 million last year, has five Tristars and three Boeing 757s but is acquiring one more Tristar and two 757s by next summer. It is expected to lease some of the aircraft to airlines around the world and fill the others with passengers who book holidays through all the major tour operators.

Mrs Hollingsworth is married to a Marks & Spencer executive and lives in East Sussex. She joined BA in 1978 and worked in the personnel, sales and reservation sections before moving to Gatwick in 1986.

She is head of cabin services—a post which involved her being trained as a stewardess and flying "when things got very busy".

Her son was born three months ago and she has only recently officially returned from maternity leave.

"She is very popular, experienced and knowledgeable and has the good of Caledonian Airways at her heart," a colleague said.

"She even telephoned the office on the day her baby was born and since then has worked from home every day until she was able to return full time to the office."

"We are all delighted by her appointment."

Beer 'far too dear in London'

By BILL FROST

BEER drinkers are paying an "arm and leg" for a pint of bitter in London, according to the latest edition of the *Good Pub Guide*, published yesterday.

A survey by the guide showed that prices in the West End could reach £1.80. "Quite often the beer drinker is quaffing his high-price pint in the dingiest of surroundings, too," said Martin Hamilton, a guide researcher.

The guide expresses concern that big brewers have sidestepped government measures allowing public houses tied to major groups to offer a "guest ale" from another brewer, and says that thousands of bars are not even planning a wider choice.

The survey, conducted before rises of about 6p, put the average price of a pint at £1.10 nationally, but £1.30 in London. The cheapest pints are in Lancashire. Greater Manchester and Merseyside, where drinkers pay about 30p less than Londoners.

"Drink and food prices are artificially high in London because the brewers and the landlords know people can afford it," Mr Hamilton said.

A Brewers' Society spokesman said: "Beer is very good value for money. After all, you could not get a glass of good wine for that price."

World's seabirds at risk off Britain

By JOHN YOUNG

A BIG proportion of the world's seabirds could be wiped out by an ecological disaster off the coasts of Britain or Ireland such as a large oil spill, according to a report published yesterday by the Nature Conservancy Council.

A three-year survey ending last March found that the three million seabirds in the Irish Sea and off the west coast of Scotland included more than half the total breeding numbers of Manx shearwater, puffin, black guillemot and gannet. The same waters also contain large populations of lesser black-backed gull, roseate tern, shag, great skua, storm petrel and razorbill.

The survey is the third in the council's Seabirds at Sea project, initiated in 1979 because of concern at the threat to marine wildlife posed by the North Sea oil industry and the rapid increase in tanker traffic.

Andy Webb, the survey leader, said yesterday that it provided the first detailed information on the internationally important seabird population that lives and

breeds off the coasts of the United Kingdom. Lack of information had constrained the NCC when it was asked to advise on the potential effects of offshore and coastal developments.

He said that the Minch, between the Scottish mainland and the Western Isles, was the most vulnerable area. In spite of a tanker route that skirted the Hebrides, many fully laden tankers still used the inner passage.

□ The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has launched a £150,000 appeal to create a nature reserve in the Arun valley in West Sussex.

The society has bought 423 acres of Pulborough Brooks, former water meadows which once supported thousands of wintering wildfowl but which have been largely dried out by drainage schemes and other agricultural improvements.

Water level controls will be built and livestock introduced to maintain short grass as feeding grounds for wintering wildfowl.

Global warming, page 16

Legal aid for all urged in libel suits

By FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL AFFAIRS
CORRESPONDENT

A REFORM of the legal aid scheme so that it covers libel and becomes available to everyone, regardless of his or her means, is called for today by Peter Carter-Ruck, the leading libel lawyer.

The absence of legal aid for defamation actions is a palpable injustice, providing "inequality of rights under the law between those who have the means to litigate and those who have not", he says.

Mr Carter-Ruck, who urges the reform in his new book *Memoirs of a Libel Lawyer*, published today, says that the failure to extend legal aid to libel cases is the last of the longstanding recommendations of some half dozen distinguished committees since 1967.

The government, he says, was reluctant to introduce the reform through a fear that it would lead to a proliferation of actions. That fear, however, was unfounded, because legal aid committees scrutinised every application and in 90 per cent of cases the final decision in the case shows it was justified.

He says everyone should qualify for legal aid according to his or her means.



Workmen preparing to repair a grass path eroded by 750,000 pairs of feet a year at Stonehenge. Grass-sown matting and sports-pitch turf will be laid down

Double Nelson.

For Nelson Piquet, victory in the Japanese Grand Prix was quickly followed last Sunday by victory in the Australian Grand Prix.

In both cases Piquet was driving a Benetton Ford powered by the Ford Cosworth racing engine.

On top of that, the Sierra RS500 Cosworth won this year's British Touring Car Championship.

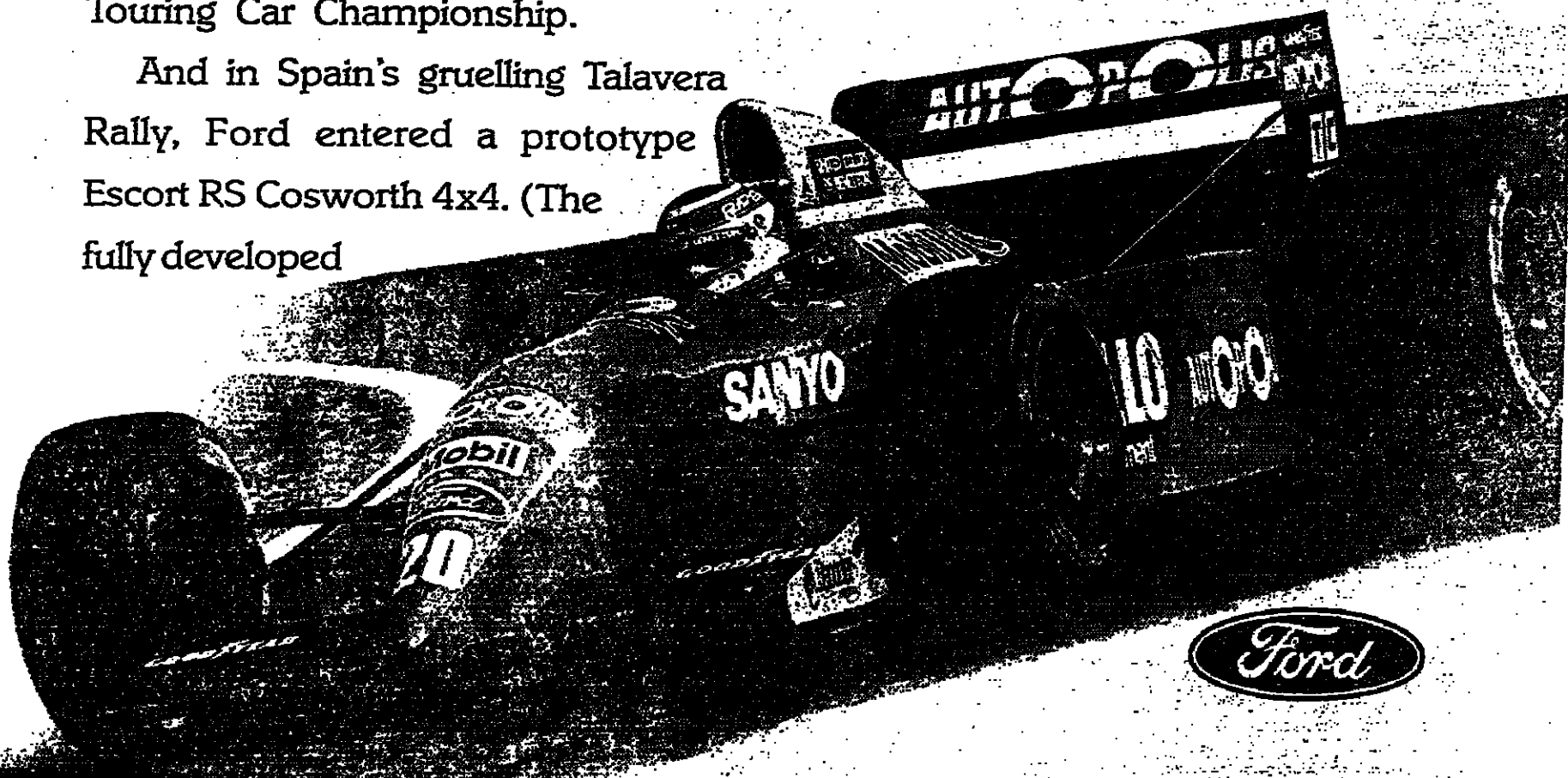
And in Spain's gruelling Talavera Rally, Ford entered a prototype Escort RS Cosworth 4x4. (The fully developed

model won't be ready until 1992.)

Remarkably, as this was its first outing, the prototype overwhelmed its rivals and took first place.

By any standards, Piquet's triumph was a justly fitting climax to a very successful season for Ford Cosworth.

A double Nelson preceded by a couple of knockout punches.



Prince calls for tax reforms to aid care of historic buildings

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE Prince of Wales last night called on the government to introduce major tax reforms to encourage the preservation and repair of historic buildings.

Speaking at a dinner at the Natural History Museum, London, at which he was presented with the Hadrian Award, the Oscar of the heritage industry by the American-based World Monuments Fund, the prince announced a major restoration project to rescue St George's Hall, Liverpool, widely regarded as one of the finest neo-classical civic buildings in Europe, which has fallen into disuse and disrepair.

"If organisations like the World Monuments Fund, and our own National Trust, are to be effective in this country in raising the necessary sums to do their jobs properly, we will need to adopt some much

more attractive tax incentives to encourage private donations," the prince said. "There have been some small improvements in this area recently, but I still feel there is a long way to go."

"In order to have a truly effective partnership between the public and private sectors, it is essential, if both are to play their parts, for governments to provide imaginative incentives in order to stimulate action and restoration."

The prince nominated St George's Hall, built between 1841 and 1874 as a concert hall and law courts, as a building in serious need of first aid. An estimated £2 million is needed to return it to its Victorian splendour. The fund is to assess what is required before announcing a donation.

The prince said: "For some time, I have been increasingly concerned about one of the greatest public buildings of the last 200 years, which sits in the very centre of one of Europe's finest cities."

He went on: "When the fund mentioned to me that it was seeking a major British project, it seemed to me to present a marvellous opportunity to do something for this great building - which has been called the finest in the world - and for Liverpool."

We should examine the way VAT was applied to building works, which now seemed "to deter, rather than encourage, the maintenance and repair of listed buildings," he said.

The fund has assisted restoration projects including the Hôtel des Invalides, Paris.

Top accolade goes to public-sector architect

THE first public-sector architect to receive the profession's top accolade in 18 years was named yesterday as Colin Stansfield Smith, right, the county architect for Hampshire (Charles Knevet writes).

Max Hutchinson, president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, announced that Mr Stansfield Smith, aged 58, was to receive the 1991 Royal Gold Medal for Architecture. He said that the jury had made an immediate and unanimous decision.

The medal, bestowed every year since 1948, was last given to a public-sector architect in 1973 when it went to Sir Leslie Martin. Mr Stansfield Smith said that he was stunned by the award but hoped that it reflected the architectural quality he sought to achieve and the "social cause" reflected in his department's work.

His department has received 36 awards and commendations in the past 10 years. He said that since he had joined the council in 1973, public-sector work had been seen as largely utilitarian and had suffered a demise.

His department, however, had courageously recaptured civic pride at a time when a stigma had been attached to work by local councils.



Team spirit: the crewmen who helped to save the life of Captain Tim Lancaster, the British Airways pilot almost sucked out of his plane, were reunited yesterday. Four of the five crew were in London to receive Men of the Year awards. They were, from left, John Heward,

the purser, with his wife Victoria, Captain Lancaster with his wife Margaret, First Officer Alistair Atchison, and, right, Simon Rogers, the steward, with wife Sue. The crew hung on to Captain Lancaster's legs after the cockpit windscreen shattered.

An everyday threat to real folk

By DOUGLAS BROOM, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

HANBURY, the Worcestershire village used as a model for the Archers radio family, is facing a new threat from developers only four months after a plan for a satellite town on its doorstep was dropped.

A draft local plan published by Wychavon district council in Droitwich near by would allow construction of two housing estates, which together would be larger than the existing village.

If the plan is implemented

100 new houses will be built on two sites near the centre of the village, which at present has 75 houses. The new plan also includes a proposal for a bypass similar to the one that caused controversy in the fictional village last year.

The BBC dropped the bypass story line after concern that it was too sensitive at the time that the real village was fighting off its own unwelcome development. The scheme has been put forward by Wychavon council as part

of efforts to find sites for 4,500 new houses in the area by the end of the century, as required by the Hereford and Worcester structure plan.

Bernie Smith, head of planning policy at Wychavon council, said that a number of villages had been designated for housing development and that Hanbury had not been singled out for special treatment. Michael Thompson, leader of the Hanbury Action Groups, which successfully fought off the plan for 5,000

house satellite town at neighbouring Mere Green, said the new proposals would destroy the village's character.

Archers devotees regularly visit Hanbury as part of official tours to see Mere Hall, model for the fictional Grey Gables, the church where both Phil and David Archer were married, and Mr Thompson's home which was the model for Manor Court, home of the Tregorran family.

"Just when we thought we could get back to living our lives this has come as a bolt from the blue," he said. "It seems as if Wychavon are being vindictive. They are out to get Hanbury because we defeated the satellite town."

The BBC said: "Ambridge does not exist. It is based on a number of villages in the area. Hanbury happens to be one of them." Mr Thompson and his fellow villagers hope nevertheless that the seven and a half million listeners to the longest-running radio serial in Britain, will again rally to the support of Hanbury.

New town for Downs denounced

By NICHOLAS WATT

OPPOSITION to proposals to build a town on 870 acres in the mid Hampshire Downs have likened the project to a terminal cancer cell.

Clive Dixon is vice-chairman of the Dever Society which is fighting Eagle Star Properties' proposals to build 5,000 houses at Micheldever Station. He said that he could see no planning justification for it. "It's like a re-run of the Foxley Wood campaign. I question the right of anyone to overwhelm the very heart of Hampshire, an area of great natural beauty," he said.

Mr Dixon said that Eagle Star wanted its scheme to be included in the new draft Hampshire County structure plan, which proposed building 58,000 houses between 1991 and 2001.

Ian MacInnes, managing director of Eagle Star, said that the new town would provide jobs and affordable housing.

War galley will sail Lord of Isles route

By WILLIAM CASH

A CREW of adventurous Scotsmen and Irishmen will face the perils of the medieval seafaring warrior by attempting to row a war galley from the west coast of Ireland to the Western Isles of Scotland.

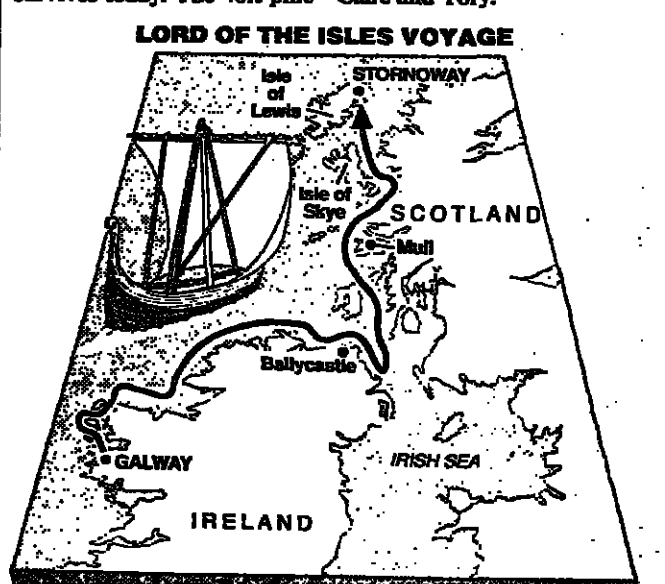
The six-week voyage, which sets off next spring from Galway, involves the building of a replica vessel as used by the Lord of the Isles, the ancient kingdom chief of the Western Isles, for their trade and war forays across the Irish Sea between the 12th and 16th centuries.

The Dawn Treader style expedition, which will cost about £90,000, has taken nearly seven years to launch as no example of the war galley survives today. The 40ft pine

vessel will boast 16 giant oars. The swan-bowed galley, resembling a Viking long boat, will be decorated on the stern and have a single mast enabling her to sail with the wind, helped by a large emblazoned square sail.

The men recruited to the historical and scientific venture, which is still seeking big a sponsor, will need to be brawny and tough. Ranald Macdonald, captain of Clanranald and joint expedition co-ordinator, said yesterday.

Starting from Killybeg Bay in county Galway, the course set will follow the Irish coast, calling at Irish mainland ports and the western islands of Clare and Tory.



Vast comet sheds light on Earth's early days

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

THE largest comet discovered, 10,000 times bigger than Halley's comet, is wandering unpredictably around the solar system, an unguided missile that might one day disintegrate to produce a vast mass of debris through which the Earth will pass.

The mysterious comet Chiron, 125 miles across, could even have played that trick before. Although it is at present in a distant orbit, astronomers at Manchester university speculate that in the past it might have been in an orbit much closer to the Sun. If so, it is likely to have thrown off lumps of material that formed the Taurid stream, a procession of rubble and dust through which the Earth passes each June and November. One of the larger pieces was

almost certainly the object that collided with the Earth 64 million years ago, causing the catastrophe that eliminated the dinosaurs. The clouds of dust, though less dramatic, may have been equally important, for they might have caused the Ice Ages, by veiling the Sun, lowering the temperature, and throwing the Earth into a period of glaciation.

The two astronomers responsible for the new calculations of Chiron's orbit, Gerhard Hahn and Mark Bailey, say in this week's *Nature* magazine that a space mission to Chiron ought to be launched. "It is such an important object that if one is going to learn anything about it, it would be marvellous to land on it," Dr Bailey says.

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Bed closures 'add 82,000 patients to NHS waiting lists'

By JILL SHERMAN, SOCIAL SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

MORE than 82,000 patients on waiting lists could have been treated this year if hospitals had not had to close 3,563 beds, according to a survey to be published today.

Nearly one in three health authorities have closed or propose to close beds this year due to financial difficulties, the study from the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts says.

The association suggests that the government will have to announce at least £2.7 billion extra for the National Health Service in its autumn statement to avoid further damaging cuts next year.

By next April, 2.1 to 3 per cent of all acute beds, equivalent to 718,274 bed-days, will have closed, the report says. If these were occupied at an 80 per cent rate with an average seven-day length of stay, 82,088 more patients could have been treated.

The report shows that 24 per cent of health authorities had closed beds this year to reduce costs or contain potential overspending. A further 7 per cent intended to close beds before next April.

The survey of 91 health authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland shows that 60 per cent of health authorities had kept within cash limits by freezing posts, drawing on reserves, reducing services and cutting the number of staff they employed.

One in four districts had frozen recruitment, 11 per cent had cut staff numbers and one in five had reduced service provision. Some 19 per cent had transferred capital to revenue and 17 per cent had increased their creditors.

The association's *Autumn Review* suggests that health service inflation is likely to run to at least 8.6 per cent next year. Health authorities would also require an extra £500 million to fund demographic changes and medical advances. John Appleby, the association's central policy unit manager, said: "The NHS will need at least £2.7 billion extra next year to cover these two elements."

A further £200 million could be needed to cover this year's underfunding on pay and the costs of implementing the health service reforms, Mr Appleby said. "Health authorities are going to have a new role next year and will have to cut their suits to fit their cloth. They will have to buy services up to the money they are given. If they do not get enough money hospital waiting lists will rise."

The survey shows that health authorities have run into financial trouble this year because of underfunding for pay awards and inflation, and the need to clear underlying deficits. Health authorities are under additional pressure because they have to clear all

underlying debts by next April, when the health service reforms are implemented.

Nearly half the health authorities said the effects of the new GP contract had caused financial pressures, estimated at an extra £6 million nationally.

Districts have been able to raise some money through cost improvement and income generation schemes, which helped compensate for inflation and allowed some developments to go ahead.

Health authorities expect to raise £182 million in cost improvement schemes by the end of the year and an extra £22 million in new income generation schemes.

William Waldegrave, the new health secretary, said the survey's figures for bed closures were misleading. They ignored new beds being brought into use, the switch to day case treatment and the reductions in lengths of stay by hospital in-patients.

The Autumn 1990 Survey (NAHAT, Birmingham Research Park, Vincent Drive, Birmingham B15 2SG; £6.50 members, £12 non-members)



Open invitation: Trista Quenzer, of the Natural History Museum, London, peers into the jaws of an allosaurus, one of the many model dinosaurs on display at an exhibition that opens next Thursday. *Dinosaurs Past and Present* contains many newly discovered fossils. Science and technology, pages 20-21

Officer in axed squad to retire

A former member of the disbanded West Midlands Police serious crime squad is to retire early on health grounds. Det Sergeant Michael Hornby, aged 48, who has diabetes, is now almost blind in one eye. Sergeant Hornby, holder of the Queen's Police Medal, and 35 other detectives were moved to office jobs after allegations that evidence was fabricated.

Sailor rescued

A French sailor taking part in a single-handed transatlantic race, was rescued by a Dutch warship as his catamaran started to sink 320 miles off Lind's End yesterday. His craft was half submerged when the *Piet Heyn* took him aboard after being alerted by coastguards.

Language link

A-level language students are to practise their skills by providing railway timetable information to foreign passengers at Ipswich in a link-up between schools and industry.

Libel victory

Jani Allan, a South African journalist, accepted undisclosed libel damages yesterday over an allegation in *Options* magazine that she had had a scandalous liaison with the right-wing Afrikaner politician Eugene Terreblanche.

GMC to act against incompetent doctors

By THOMSON PRENTICE, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE General Medical Council is planning a radical disciplinary procedure, aimed at exposing doctors who fail to maintain high standards. Doctors who are consistently incompetent, offhand towards their patients or unwilling to change their bad habits could face punishment.

Sir Robert Kilpatrick, the council president, said yesterday that support for the proposal was being sought within the profession. "We hope this scheme will answer most of the criticisms levelled by the public about the fitness of doctors to practise. Our

existing framework only allows us to deal with complaints about specific events involving doctors. We want to be able to deal with patterns of professional behaviour and standards of practice that take place over longer periods."

Doctors who were complained against would have their attitudes and behaviour towards patients assessed locally by experts appointed by the council. If improvements were not achieved, "recalcitrant recidivists" would face charges at public hearings of the council. The new system could be introduced in 1992.

British humour

Appeal launched for £1.5m cartoon gallery

By SIMON TAIT, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

HUMOUR, H.M. Bateman is credited with saying, is a serious business, and nobody takes it more seriously than his fellow cartoonists.

"Comic art is there to be mined, enjoyed, protected," Nicholas Garland said gravely yesterday. "It's not always the funniest of cartoons that appeals to us." He is one of a trio of comic artists, with John Jensen and Mel Calman, of *The Times*, who have responded to a clarion call made in 1949 by Bateman, who in "The man who..." created a cartoon series that has become a byword for apopleptic clubroom consternation.

Bateman said: "Is it not high time that some official recognition of the worth of comic learning was made? A permanent collection of some of the best examples should be got together and housed under one roof forming a sort of National Gallery of Humorous Art."

At the Royal Society of Arts yesterday, where Bateman made his original enjoiner at a lecture a few yards away from where the 18th-century caricaturist and political cartoonist Thomas Rowlandson lived, a £1.5 million scheme for a National Museum of Cartoon Art was launched by the Cartoon Art Trust along with an



"Backed a winner": the joys of the turf

appeal for the money. Calman, who thought of the idea two years ago, was absent, laid unrisibly low by influenza. The three are on the museum's board of directors with Bateman's daughter, Diana Willis, W. Heath Robinson's son, Oliver, Ann McMullan, Pont's cousin, and Simon Henegage, a collector, as chairman.

"Most art critics in this country still place comic art some way below the salt," Mr Henegage said. There is already a preliminary design for a building in the shadow of the museum which Bateman made fun of in his narrative cartoon "The Boy Who Breathed on the Glass in the British Museum".

The new museum has a considerable collection of its own: many of the items have been donated and others bought from the proceeds of an auction a year ago of contemporary cartoonists' work, which raised £70,000.

"The trouble with cartoonists," David Thomas, editor of *Punch*, said, "is that when you get more than one of them in a room it's almost impossible to stop a fight". With three of them on the board discussing acquisitions and exhibition ideas, the proceedings could be unfunny, Jensen acknowledges. "Cartoonists never talk about jokes or what's funny."

Had he thought of a humorous illustration in homage depicting H.M. Bateman as The Man Who Suggested a National Museum of Cartoon Art? "No. It just wouldn't be funny."



Ready for battle: a Bateman colonel

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Howe 'has no great policy difference with party'

SIR Geoffrey Howe's letter of resignation from the government last week did not reveal any important differences of policy between him and the rest of the Conservative party, the prime minister told the Commons yesterday.

Speaking on the opening day of the six-day debate on the Queen's speech, she also said that industry was better equipped and managed than ever, and the government was getting on top of inflation.

Margaret Thatcher was interrupted constantly as she started to speak about the resignation of Sir Geoffrey. She said that the government much regretted the resignation after his long and distinguished service as foreign secretary and his contribution as Chancellor in laying the foundation of Britain's economic success.

Referring to his resignation letter, she said: "Sir Geoffrey makes clear that he does not want to see a single currency imposed on this country. Nor do we."

He wanted to see Britain playing a full part in Europe's future monetary arrangements. So did the government.

The truth about Neil Kinnock was that he was trying to cover his own embarrassment about Europe because many Labour MPs thought the government was right and so did many of its supporters in the country. They did not want to see Parliament's powers steadily and relentlessly diminished. They did not want to see sterling disappear. They believed in Britain and they knew you had to stand up and be counted in order to uphold your beliefs.

PRIME MINISTER

"When the leader of the Opposition comes to say precisely where he stands he is very obscure."

He sought the approval of the federalists, including the president of the Commission, who had spoken of four-fifths of economic decisions being taken by Brussels. This was not surprising because socialists stood for intervention and central control.

Mr Kinnock was also suspicious that most people did not want a federal Europe. So he was in a dilemma. "He liked to set his policy according to the prevailing wind, but he is not quite sure which way it is blowing, so he resorts to his usual tactic: the less he has to say the more he says it."

Britain, she said, was the only country to have put forward a fully worked-out proposal for the way ahead — not for a single currency but for a common currency that could be used alongside national currencies.

"We want Britain to be part of a successful, prosperous and free trading European Community. We want to work closely with our European friends. But we also want to preserve our national currency and the sovereignty of this House of Commons. That, I believe, is what Britain's interests require and what the people want."

Earlier, Mrs Thatcher said that inflation needed to be brought down and the government would bring it down. Industry was better equipped and managed than ever before. New industries were



The prime minister and Neil Kinnock, Opposition leader, making their way to the House of Lords yesterday to hear the Queen's Speech

growing up and flourishing. The government was now getting on top of inflation. Savings were rising.

The Labour party still believed that prosperity could be created by politicians rather than by enterprise, so they proposed to "make strategic interventions in key sectors of industry". In other words, they would take money from successful firms to hand out to failures, and would restore a host of powers to trade union bosses to disrupt industry, and

would take enterprises from those who knew how to manage them to give to socialist politicians who did not.

"Ex-communists in Eastern Europe are far more advanced in their economic thinking than the backward-looking British Labour party" (Conservative cheers).

Wherever one looked, those who had experienced socialism most were those who liked it least.

Mr Kinnock was always saying that the government

should cut interest rates, even when inflationary pressures were rising. He was like a stopped watch that was bound, eventually, to tell the correct time.

"We cut interest rates at the right time, as all the published indicators since have shown, and we shall only make further reductions when are sure it is right."

Prosperity had brought enormous expansion of choice in goods and services that people could buy. Choice must also extend to public services. They did not belong to government departments, health authorities, town halls, or unions, but to citizens who paid for them with their taxes.

Reforms passed in this parliament were giving people more choice, so that parents, not the local council, chose which school their children went to, and they were not restricted in their choice to local authority schools because every school had the chance to become an independent state-aided school.

The criminal justice bill would carry forward the fight against crime, ensuring that the severity of the sentence matched the seriousness of the crime and the need to protect the public. It would also make the actual sentence served more closely related to the sentence passed.

Ashdown fears mood for war

THE SLD

PADDY Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, described the Queen's speech as a sad little programme for the last year of a government that had claimed itself to be reforming and radical. Where it should have been precise, on great issues, the programme was confused, opaque and indecisive.

It was sad because the government's internal problems were preventing it from addressing the great issues. "We have a party which has run out of steam and as we shall see in the by-elections, has run out of its time," he said.

Like an old fighter, Margaret Thatcher was always at her best when under attack, but he wondered if she any longer knew what she was doing it for.

She should resign, but he did not expect her to accept the advice. She would continue to fight. As a result the Conservative party would suffer and, more important, so would the country. Nowhere would that be more true than in Europe. Twice before we had turned our back on Europe. If we did so this time, the outcome would be even more bitter.

The government was stumbling from one carefully cobbled-together formula to another. The prime minister was doing Britain no good by seeking always to fight against the tide instead of becoming involved and turning that tide. She gave the impression that she wanted to row Britain to a secluded area of the Atlantic where she could play Queen Canute.

Liberal Democrats wanted a single currency, but it might be that the Chancellor's hard-euro proposal was a perfectly sensible step forward.

A mood for war in the Gulf was growing in Britain and America, but he did not yet believe that sanctions against Iraq had taken their full effect yet.

John Biffen, former minister, and Conservative MP for North Shropshire, said that a next stage in the confrontation with Iraq was moving inexorably closer. "Conflict has an uncanny knack of changing its objectives. You cannot ring-fence the Kuwaiti situation."

A regional pact was a formidable objective and he hoped that, with the military planning that now appeared to be proceeding, there was a degree of political and social judgment, so that it would not be another example of winning the war and losing the peace.

Gulf news, page 10

Prime minister 'is unfit to represent UK'

THE OPPOSITION

THE prime minister was accused yesterday of being unfit to represent Britain in the European Community. Neil Kinnock told MPs that Margaret Thatcher was "incapable of making the arguments that are essential to the exercise of our influence at this time of great change".

Failure to face those changes would result in Britain's being relegated to the second rank in Europe.

To have success in the Community there must be a partnership between industry and government, Mr Kinnock said at the start of the debate on the Queen's speech. "This government lives to deny that partnership."

On the evidence of Sir Geoffrey Howe, who resigned from the cabinet last week, the prime minister "very definitely" did not have the right approach. "He has let it be known that the mood of the prime minister has struck most notably in Rome last month, and in the House of Commons last Tuesday, make it more difficult for Britain to hold and maintain a position of influence in this vital debate about the future of the Community."

That was the candid assessment of a former foreign secretary and deputy prime minister. It was not a petulant reaction. On the contrary, Sir Geoffrey's words and decisions were cool and deliberate "and all the more damning for that".

What Sir Geoffrey was saying, in the most precise terms, was that Mrs Thatcher's conduct of affairs made her unfit to represent Britain in the councils of the European Community.

There could hardly be a more serious charge against the prime minister, coming as it does, from someone who is renowned for his loyalty to the Conservative party and has been closely involved with the prime minister for many years. And, of course, she is guilty on that charge. Anyone who saw her last Tuesday knows that.

She is incapable of making the alliances that Britain needs. She is incapable of making the arguments that are essential to the exercise of our influence at this time of great change.

The despair of many in the Conservative party, who agreed with Sir Geoffrey and the divisions in the government could not be concealed or healed.

Some would try to rescue her.

This week the foreign secretary had said that nobody was seriously expecting Britain to submerge our Parliament into a federal state. He also said that we could fight our corner for British interests without frightening ourselves.

with ogress. "But does the prime minister, who last week said that the European Commission was striving to extinguish democracy, agree with her foreign secretary? Of course she does not."

If she stopped claiming that "Euro-ogres" were combining to submerge Parliament she would be left with nothing in her repertoire.

She did not need to accept federalism or anything so outlandish, or to become compliant. Nobody else did.

What she did need to do was to face the realities of change in the European Community and then do everything possible to shape affairs in a way to bring maximum opportunity to our country.

If that was not done, then Britain would face relegation to the second rank among European countries.

Mr Kinnock said that the Conservative party had lately and tamely followed where Mrs Thatcher had led, supporting her excesses and endorsing her extremism.

"They could and should get rid of her now. But whether they do or not, the people will get rid of her at the next general election."

Earlier in his response to the Queen's speech, Mr Kinnock said that it contained measures that the Opposition would support, including those to reduce crime, to prevent drug trafficking, to improve the collection of maintenance for children and to provide new benefits for the disabled.

He added: "Of course we will continue to support United Nations policy for securing the complete and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Nothing less will do."

He would praise the fulfilling of UN policy through peaceful means and that was why there was a strong case for prolonged and sustained sanctions supported by military deployment to maintain pressure on President Saddam Hussein until he complied fully with international law.

Meanwhile, he said, the Iraqi dictator was playing a callous game with the hostages and their families. Relatives who visited the hostages knew that they were risking physical injury and exploitation. But if anxious relatives were to go to Iraq, Mr Kinnock offered understanding and compassion.

Leading article, page 17

Parliament today
Commons (2.30): Chancellor's autumn statement. Continuation of debate on the Queen's speech (foreign affairs and defence).
Lords (3): Continuation of debate on the Queen's speech.

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YOU'LL LIKE THE DIFFERENCE

Ministers committed to Kuwait

THE Queen said in her speech to Parliament:

My lords and members of the House of Commons, I look forward to visiting the United States of America in May and being present on the occasion of the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Zimbabwe next autumn.

My government attaches the highest priority to national security, and to the preservation of international peace with freedom and justice. It will give full support to Nato as the basis for collective Western defence, and will maintain adequate and effective nuclear and conventional forces. It will play a full part in adapting Nato strategy and will take forward work on restructuring our forces to reflect the welcome changes in Europe and threats to peace in other parts of the world.

My government will work for balanced and verifiable measures of arms control. It welcomes the prospect of an agreement on conventional armed forces in Europe and will be active in further negotiations on this, and in the multilateral negotiations in Geneva on the abolition of chemical weapons.

My government will continue to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations. My government will work with the utmost determination, together with our allies and the whole international community, for the unconditional implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council which require the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait, and the restoration of the independence and legitimate government of Kuwait.

My government will maintain its efforts to secure the release of all Britons held hostage or detained in Kuwait, Iraq, Lebanon and elsewhere in the Middle East. My government will continue to work for long-term peace in the Middle East, including a settlement of the Palestinian problem.

My government will host the next economic summit in London in July.

My government will work

to strengthen still further the good relations between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, and to buttress the new democracies in Eastern Europe. It will play an active part in the Paris meeting of heads of state and government of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

My government welcomes the unification of Germany and looks forward to working closely with the government of the united Germany.

My government will continue to work with our Community partners to complete the single market; to reinforce budgetary discipline; to continue reform of the common agricultural policy and to bring about a successful conclusion to the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations.

It will contribute constructively to the inter-governmental conference on economic and monetary union and Community institutions beginning in December. It welcomes the new European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to London.

My government will promote further international co-operation on environmental issues.

My government will maintain a substantial aid programme aimed at promoting

My government looks forward to working with the united Germany

sustainable economic and social progress and good government in developing countries.

My government will continue its policy of encouragement to all sides in South Africa to enter negotiations to create through peaceful means a democratic non-racial society.

My government will work vigorously to fulfil its responsibilities for Hong Kong, building on the Sino-British joint declaration. It will honour its commitments to the people of the Falkland Islands.

My government will continue to play a full part in the

Commonwealth. My government will maintain its fight against terrorism.

Members of the House of Commons, estimates for the public service will be laid before you.

My lords and members of the House of Commons, my government will maintain firm financial policies, strengthened by the exchange-rate mechanism, designed to reduce inflation and foster the conditions necessary for sustained growth. It will continue to promote enterprise and improve the working of the economy. It will maintain firm control of public expenditure with the aim of keeping its share of a national income on a downward trend.

A bill will be introduced to facilitate contractor operation of the Atomic Weapons Establishment. Legislation will be introduced to provide for the sale of the insurance services business of the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

My government will promote improved efficiency and safety in transport. Legislation will be introduced to encourage privately financed roads; to reform procedures for streetworks; to improve road traffic; to convert trust ports into private companies; and to provide for a second Severn crossing.

Legislation will be introduced to improve arrangements for compensation for compulsory purchase of land and buildings and to make the town and country planning system more efficient.

My government will continue to work for the regeneration of our cities.

My government will vigorously pursue its policies in fighting crime. A bill will be brought forward for England and Wales to deal with sentencing of offenders and to strengthen the parole system.

My government will work vigorously to combat the traf-

ficking and misuse of drugs nationally and internationally.

My government is concerned to strengthen parental responsibility for children. Measures will be introduced to improve the assessment, collection and enforcement of maintenance.

A bill will again be brought before you to give our courts the jurisdiction to try alleged war criminals.

My government will continue to take action to improve quality in education. A bill will be introduced to establish new machinery for negotiating the pay and conditions of schoolteachers in England and Wales.

My government will continue to work to improve the quality of health and social services.

In Northern Ireland, my government will be resolute in its efforts to defeat terrorism. A bill will be introduced to replace existing anti-terrorism legislation. It will sustain its efforts to secure political progress, to strengthen the economy and to promote mutual respect and trust throughout the community. It will maintain positive relations with the Republic of Ireland.

For Scotland, a bill will be introduced to create a natural heritage agency to achieve an integrated approach to conservation, and countryside matters.

Legislation will be introduced to provide new benefits for disabled people.

Other measures will be laid before you. My lords and members of the House of Commons, I pray that the blessing of almighty God may rest upon your counsels.

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Tories all in a dither over the right time to challenge the leader

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

There is no settled view in the Conservative parliamentary party or within the government about whether there will be a leadership challenge to Margaret Thatcher this week. Headless chickens ruled yesterday. One minister anxious that any such outcome be avoided said: "I have to say it seems likely. Our postbags are showing she has become the issue. The grumbles about poll tax, interest rates and Europe are all focused on her."

A minute later an ex-minister with no reason to love Mrs Thatcher told me: "I don't see a challenge. The mood is now 'heads down and bang on in there for the general election.'" If there were a challenge, he predicted, she would gain the support of a bigger proportion of MPs than the 84 per cent who backed her last year. In a sense Mrs Thatcher

was bound to be a loser in last year's contest, whatever the result. Technically, Sir Anthony Meyer's challenge left her merely bruised. That only 60 MPs denied her their support was hardly surprising, considering that they included 68 whose frontbench services have been dispensed with and 97 Tories who have served 11 years on the back benches without advancement, and know it will not come from her.

But that first challenge did destroy the aura of invincibility. It has made it less of a daunting leap into the unknown for someone to try again this year. And another factor has increased the chances of a second challenge. Immediately after last year's contest a number of dissidents said they did not see the likelihood of a repeat this year. It would, they argued, be too close to a general election to risk another. But the increasing lack of synchronisation between electoral ambition and economic

performance has pushed the prospects of an election to next autumn at the earliest. The "no time left" argument no longer inhibits.

There were a few who denied her their support last year because they felt she needed a shot across the bows, particularly on Europe, but had no intention of repeating the action. They might now feel along with Sir Geoffrey Howe that lessons had not been learned sufficiently.

The insistence that Mrs Thatcher has reached the end of her shelf-life as far as the electorate is concerned is balanced by the argument that foreign affairs will play heavily at the next election, that the best Tory tactic is to harp on public anxiety about Neil Kinnock's qualifications for the world scene and that her experience is a card that should not be thrown away.

While some argue that Mrs Thatcher has become a liability and must be

challenged to "lance the boil", other critics say such a challenge should be mounted only if it is likely to overturn her. A challenge that merely wings her will cause maximum turmoil for the party, lose more seats and do nothing to lance any boil. Indeed, it could strengthen her ability to resist a "last gasp" approach from the sober-minded gentlemen carrying a pearl-handled revolver into the Downing Street library after a local elections disaster next spring. On that argument there is little point in a stalking horse challenge: it must be a real one from a figure who will attract votes in his own right.

Sir Geoffrey Howe will not stand and the new question this week was not so much whether Michael Heseltine would but whether he had damaged himself fatally by issuing that "sit-it-up" letter to his constituency officers and then scuttling off abroad. Mr Heseltine has played things brilliantly

until now, defying the laws of political gravity by remaining a national figure on the back benches. But that move, and some better than average Tory crisis-management, has raised old questions that Mr Heseltine had worked hard to bury. Once again Tory MPs are muttering, as they did over the mace-swinging incident and over Westland, about instability and over-reaction.

Then too there are those who want the next Tory party leader to be John Major or Chris Patten. Although Mr Major is advancing fast and looking tougher by the week, most would feel he is not yet in a position to clinch the leadership if a first-round challenge by a maverick candidate should demonstrate that Mrs Thatcher has lost the confidence of the party. The same applies more forcibly to those who see Mr Patten as the hope of the future.

That leaves a significant group with an interest in no contest yet. And there

are signs that the whips have dusted off the argument they used last year to deter Tory wets from precipitating a contest. Just suppose a left-wing challenger were to succeed in toppling Mrs Thatcher, they argue, how would the hard-core of the Thatcherite right react to that but by making the party effectively unleadable for a year or more in their bitterness.

I wonder. The right have seats to defend as well. But one thing is sure. There are clear signs of regret now in the Tory high command about the failure after last year's contest to press on with changes in the rules requiring any leadership challenger to have the backing of a minimum number of 25 (or, like Labour, 40) MPs.

On this as on the selection of by-election candidates, a party that has had 11 years in government has something to learn from one that has endured that period in opposition.

Government presses on with legislation to prosecute Nazis

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL REPORTER

WAR CRIMES

THE government confirmed yesterday its determination to use the parliament acts if necessary to force the war crimes bill through the House of Lords next spring.

The Queen's Speech made clear that the identical measure killed off by the upper House in June will be re-introduced this session. However, as promised by the former deputy prime minister Sir Geoffrey Howe, possible

amendments will be discussed with peers to try to meet their objections about changing the law to bring to trial suspected war criminals who fled from Nazi-occupied territory to Britain.

Government sources also indicated yesterday that Tory MPs could be "whipped" to support the bill this session in

contrast to the previous free votes in both houses.

The bill would set up a special Home Office unit to pursue 127 suspects identified in the Hetherington/Chalmers report. As most of the suspects are now in their 80s, Home Office officials expect that no more than a handful would ever be brought to trial if the legislation becomes law next summer.

The Lords took the unprecedented action of throwing out the original war crimes bill at the second reading by 207 votes to 74 after the MPs had voted four to one in favour of the legislation. A total of 112 Conservative peers and 54 independent peers rebelled, including two former Lord Chancellors: Lord Hailsham and Lord Havers. In addition only eight of the government's payroll vote in the Lords of 22 turned out to vote for the bill.

The contrasting votes showed up the generation gap between the two houses with support for the bill coming most strongly from the post-war generation. Many MPs, including Margaret Thatcher, had been fiercely lobbied by Jewish constituents to change the law so that suspected Nazi war criminals who are now British residents could be prosecuted in Britain even though the atrocities were committed in other countries.

Although MPs objected to the peers' having killed a bill passed by the elected House of Commons, many said after the Lords' debate that they believed the legislation should be dropped.

Critics in the Lords still have the power to embarrass the government by tabling numerous amendments to the bill next spring. If no agreement is reached between MPs and peers by the end of the session, however, the government has the power to use the parliament acts to override the Lords and send the bill directly to the Queen for royal assent.

Bill opens way to reduce road work

TRANSPORT

By MICHAEL DYNES, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE wanton digging of holes in the road is to be abolished after long-awaited legislative proposals were unveiled in the Queen's Speech yesterday.

Once implemented, the highways bill will end the practice in which the utilities and local authorities effectively dig up the same hole twice and reduce by half the estimated three million holes dug in roads each year. The bill will grant the water, gas, electricity and telephone utilities authority to make permanent road repairs instead of temporary repairs, and waiting for the local authority to make the repair permanent months if not years later.

The utility services say that motorists, accustomed to viewing the roads primarily as highways for vehicles, often forget they are also highways for power supplies, communications, and other essential services. Moreover, because of increased demand for new services, such as cable television, many roads will have to be excavated for new communications networks.

The bill should reduce much of the traffic chaos caused by unnecessary duplication of street works, at the same time making roads safer for cyclists and reducing the number of pedestrian accidents caused by holes in the road. The Pedestrians' Association says such accidents cause 200 fatalities a year.

Public anger over the proliferation of street works, exacerbated by years of neglect and delay, forced the government to find time for the measure. In addition to reducing the number of holes dug in roads, the bill will introduce a computerised street works register, enabling the highway authorities to co-ordinate works so that newly resurfaced roads are not dug up for utility repairs.

Rodney Guinn, co-ordinator for the national joint utilities group, which represents the interests of the water, gas,

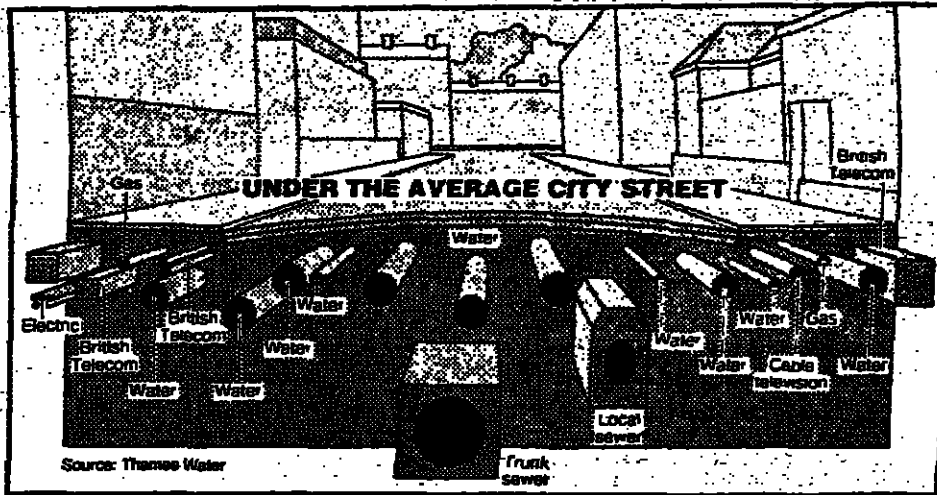


Men at work: the common sight of traffic congestion caused by road work, which the new bill hopes to relieve

electricity and telephone organisations, said: "The street works bill is good news. It will mean fewer holes in the road, a better road surface and less road congestion."

The bill contains provisions for reforming street works legislation and provisions clearing the way for the introduction of privately financed toll roads and bridges. The bill is one of four transport bills in the new parliamentary session, which will deal with the reform of road traffic law, the privatisation of trust ports and construction of the second Severn bridge.

Leading article, page 17



Source: Thames Water

Patten gets capping powers

THE POLL TAX

CHRIS Patten, the environment secretary, is to gain powers to set the poll tax levels of capped councils under a new local government finance bill that will be laid before the Commons by Christmas (Douglas Broom writes).

The new legislation was not mentioned in the Queen's Speech but the environment department confirmed last night that work on the bill was at an advanced stage.

Fresh legislation is needed to plug a loophole opened in the government's powers by a ruling by the Court of Appeal in September that Mr Patten could not specify the poll tax levels of capped authorities. The new bill will leave capped authorities no alternative but to set their poll tax as directed by the government.

A second environment department bill will exempt owners of holiday caravans from the poll tax. It will be tabled in the New Year. ● Poll tax collectors and telephonists at Haringey council, north London, have called off a strike over redundancies caused by poll tax capping after the council withdrew notices issued to six staff.

Local pay deals for teachers

EDUCATION

LOCAL authorities and schools will be allowed to opt out of national pay agreements in 1991-2 under a bill to restore teachers' negotiating rights that were removed in 1987 (David Tytler writes).

Kenneth Clarke, the new education secretary, inherits the proposal from his predecessor, John MacGregor. Mr Clarke accepts the view that local authorities and schools should be allowed to offer salaries to attract good teachers. His department, however, said that the regulations were so complicated that few local authorities would be interested.

The teachers' unions, anxious to maintain national pay scales, quickly objected to the idea, believing that rich authorities would offer more money to recruit good teachers from less wealthy areas.

Britain's largest teachers' union, the National Union of Teachers, expressed disappointment at the government's decision to allow local pay bargaining. "This will create a free-for-all, particularly at a time of teacher shortage, and add further to the disruption of our children's education," it said.

No change in selection for Tories

BY-ELECTION

THE Conservative party has rejected altering the way by-election candidates are selected after a review in the wake of the loss of the safe Tory seat of Eastbourne (Richard Ford writes).

Kenneth Baker, party chairman, ruled out changes to the selection system during a visit yesterday to Bradford North, where there has been criticism of the Tory campaign and of the candidate, Joy Atkin.

The party hierarchy has come under pressure to increase Conservative Central Office involvement in choosing by-election candidates but Mr Baker said: "I do not intend to change that at all. We are a democratic party. We do not impose candidates on associations like the Labour party."

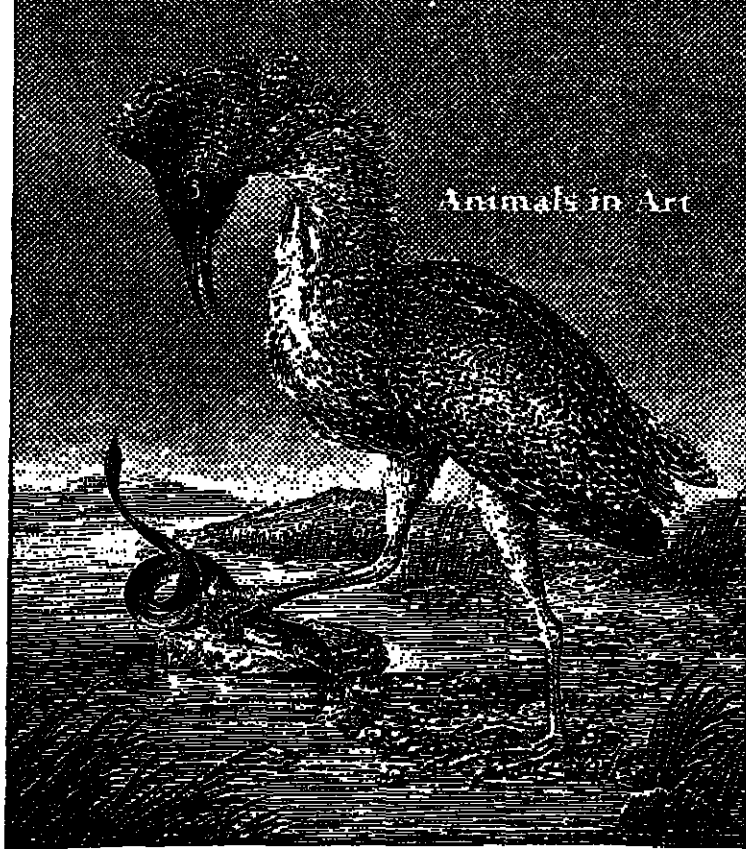
The Conservative party is, however, understood to plan more intensive media training for candidates.

With the Tories expected to poll badly in today's by-elections in Bradford North and in Bootle, Mr Baker said that he took full responsibility for Miss Atkin's campaign. It had not been helped by "noises off" from the resignation of Sir Geoffrey Howe and Michael Heseltine's criticism of the prime minister. Labour, defending a 1,633 majority in Bradford North, showed last-minute jitters about a possible low turnout. Its candidate, Terry Rooney, said: "The main reason it has been so low key is the lack of a credible opponent. You need two to make a fight."

Conservatives believe they can exclude the Liberal Democrat, David Ward, from second place.

Animals in Art

COUNTRY LIFE



Animals in Art

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Jewish extremists call for vengeance at Kahane funeral

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN JERUSALEM

RABBI Meir Kahane, the extremist Jewish leader who was assassinated in New York by an Egyptian-born assailant, was buried in Jerusalem yesterday amid impassioned calls from his followers for "bloody vengeance" against Palestinians and other Arabs.

Some of the militants tried to storm the headquarters of Israeli Television, which lies along the route the funeral procession took, and threw stones at passing Arab cars.

"For everything there is a season," a black-coated rabbi from Kahane's own Yeshiva (seminary) told the thousands of mourners, giving his own version of Ecclesiastes. "A time to be born, a time to die — and a time to kill."

An Orthodox student shouted between sobs and wails: "From now on we will let our friend the sub-machinegun talk, from now on our friend the knife will speak for us." As darkness fell, hundreds of Jewish extremists roamed the streets, and there were several reports of assaults on Arab workers.

Earlier an estimated 15,000 people accompanied the coffin along a three-mile route from the Yeshiva in a working-class suburb near Arab East Jerusalem to a cemetery on a hill just outside the city. Members of Kach, the militant organisation that Kahane founded, escorted the coffin, some of them armed with Uzi sub-machineguns.

But the Jerusalem police, mindful of the criticism of their mishandling of the Temple Mount riots a month ago,

turned out in force to ensure that order was maintained. Commander Arye Bibi, the chief of police, warned Kach members that "whoever creates a provocation will be arrested". Journalists, often a target of Kach anger because of alleged pro-Arab sympathies, were given special police protection. There were 2,500 police on duty, with



Kahane: murdered by Egyptian-born assailant

some guarding obvious Arab targets.

Two government ministers from the right-wing administration of Yitzhak Shamir, attended the funeral even though Kach militants regard Mr Shamir's Likud party as too moderate. In a eulogy, Rabbi Mordechai Elyahu, the chief Sephardi rabbi, appealed to the crowd not to seek revenge. He praised the Brooklyn-born Kahane — seen by many in Israel as an

outsider who encouraged violence on the Israeli right-wing after his election as an MP in 1984 — as a man of virtue, honour and charity. He made no mention of Kahane's demands for Arabs to be deported.

Kach activists waved the symbol of their movement, a yellow flag with a clenched fist on it, and shouted "death to Arabs". But not many took up the cry, and in all probability Kach was buried along with its leader yesterday, if only because it depended on Kahane's charisma. Kach, according to security forces, has only a few hundred hardcore members.

However, thousands more sympathised with the views Kahane represented, and his death seems bound to worsen the atmosphere of Arab-Jewish enmity.

Gershon Salomon, whose small group of zealots, known as the Temple Mount Faithful, sparked off the Temple Mount riots by trying to lay a foundation stone for a Jewish temple, said Kahane had been "a great fighter for Jewish survival" when I came across him in the crowd. "The only answer lies in expelling all Arabs from the land of Israel."

Two Arab-Israeli members of the Knesset (parliament) have left Jerusalem because of threats made against them by Kach. One, Abdel Wahab Darawish, said he denounced the assassination of Kahane but wanted protection for Arabs against violence by extremist Jews "during this heated period".



Funeral process: supporters of Rabbi Meir Kahane's Kach movement in a scuffle at his funeral in Jerusalem yesterday as they tried to move the crowd away when a van carrying his body arrived at his yeshiva or seminary

Saudi women flout ban on driving

By YOUSSEF IZRAHIM

IN DARING defiance of the Saudi tradition against females driving, about 70 veiled women gathered in front of a supermarket in Riyadh this week, dismissed their drivers, and drove in a convoy of cars before being stopped and detained by police.

Saudi said the demonstration on Tuesday was the first known open protest by women and a rare manifestation of public sentiment in this conservative Islamic nation. Equally startling was that

virtually all the women had the support of husbands or close male relatives before undertaking the action, several organisers said.

The luxury cars were intercepted by police after the convoy had broken into smaller groups.

Some of the women refused to lower their windows or communicate with the police before they were taken away. Saudi officials said early yesterday that they had been released after signing a pledge

that they would not repeat their action. The presence of American and other Western forces is stirring considerable debate about whether to bring Saudi Arabia more in line with the rest of the world.

But many of the women involved in the protest emphasised it had nothing to do with the presence of Westerners. Organisers said the protest was focused on the right to drive as a matter of convenience and household economics. Although there is

no written law that prevents women from driving, they are barred by tradition from doing so and must use a paid driver or a male relative to go anywhere. Under severe Islamic strictures, Saudi women are veiled and forced to head to toe and are forbidden to appear in public with men.

Protest organisers said many of the women obtained driving licences while in the United States or Europe. Many came from prominent families. (New York Times)

Cheysson fuels talk of deal on hostages

Paris — Speculation that France may have engaged in secret negotiations to secure last week's release of all its hostages in Iraq has been revived by ambiguous comments from a former French foreign minister (Philip Jacobson writes).

Despite the Socialist government's categorical denials of any deal with President Saddam Hussein, two recent interviews with Claude Cheysson, who served under President Mitterrand, have succeeded in clouding this exceptionally sensitive issue.

Yesterday in *Le Figaro*, M Cheysson specifically refused to confirm or deny persistent rumours that he had met Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi foreign minister, not long before the Saddam regime allowed 262 French nationals to fly home.

After some inconclusive fencing over whether this supposed encounter happened in Amman or Tunis, M Cheysson did deny that he had visited Amman since the Gulf confrontation began. He declared: "I met whom I chose, that's true. Besides, if I did meet Mr Aziz, I fail to see what harm there would have been."

Under pressure to give a straight answer about any contact he might have made with the Iraqis, M Cheysson, an experienced diplomat, sidestepped adroitly. "During my time in government, I had to cope with various matters involving hostages, and the thing I learnt was that one should never comment on the conditions in which their release has been secured."

Since M Cheysson had handled an interview on French television last weekend in similarly ambiguous fashion, declaring that he "denies nothing" on the subject of the hostage release, suspicions were inevitably aroused.

Letters, page 17

Beirut blast

Beirut — At least six people were killed and 15 others wounded when a car rigged with explosives blew up outside a bakery in Awkar, a Christian suburb north of here, killing the owner, his wife and their three children. The explosion occurred 20 yards from an office belonging to the pro-Damascus Syrian National Social Party, which blamed the Lebanese Forces Christian militia. (AFP)

Dutch refusal

The Hague — The Netherlands said it had rejected a British request to send more troops to the Gulf to strengthen the West's alliance against Iraq. The country would consider sending more troops "only if there is a UN resolution supporting such an action", a defence ministry spokesman said. Britain asked it to contribute a decontamination company and an engineer support unit. (Reuters)

Desert casualties

Saudi Arabia — More than 2,000 American soldiers have been airlifted to hospitals in Germany since the military build-up in the Gulf began in August. Most had suffered heat stroke and minor injuries. Officers said that the number reporting sick had dropped as the weather cooled. Temperatures have fallen to around 30C during the day, compared with 45C in August. (Reuters)

Letters on way

The first guaranteed messages from hostages in Iraq and Kuwait should be on their way to families in Britain by the end of next week, it was announced yesterday by the British Red Cross, which has negotiated a deal with its counterpart in Iraq, the Red Crescent. The families will be able to reply in the same way.

UN fears Iraq may turn drugs into arms

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

MEDICINES provided to Iraq under an exemption from the United Nations embargo could be used for chemical and biological warfare, the head of the UN sanctions committee said yesterday.

Marijatta Rasi, the Finnish ambassador who chairs the committee, said that she was concerned about the large amounts of medicines being shipped to Iraq. She said she had seen requests from Iraq for a ten-year supply of certain medicines, although she had no evidence that drugs were being misused.

Britain and several other nations continue to supply medicines to Iraq under the exemption. UK diplomats said yesterday that Britain adhered to a European Community list of medicines that cannot be used for military purposes. Nevertheless, Miss Rasi said she was worried that the medicines exemption might allow components for weapons to reach Iraq.

Under the UN blockade, aircraft and ships carrying medicines to Iraq have to be inspected by neighbouring countries or the multinational naval force in the Gulf. But there is no explicit restriction on the type of medicines that must be allowed through, and countries do not have to notify the UN that they are sending medicines.

Debate request: Iraq has asked for a special debate in the UN General Assembly on the American military build-up in the Gulf, which it described as "a direct danger and a manifest threat to Arab and international peace and security". UN officials said the assembly was unlikely to grant the request.

Japan tries to save face on Gulf force

FROM JOE JOSEPH IN TOKYO

JAPAN'S government has effectively abandoned its plan to send troops to the Gulf. But it is unwilling to kill the proposal formally in parliament, until opposition parties agree to draft an alternative law that will show it is not trying to shift its international obligations.

The government is also struggling to limit the humiliation for Toshiki Kaifu, the prime minister, whose clumsy handling of the delicate legislation has weakened his grip on his post.

Ichiro Ozawa, the secretary-general and policy architect of the ruling Liberal Democratic party, has been pressing for a vote on the bill "for the sake of Japan's trust in the international community". But the government's new goal now seems to be a compromise bill that would win the opposition's support. The govern-

ment's plan to build a 2,000-man United Nations peace co-ordinating corps, including some military personnel, has been rejected by opposition parties — which control the upper house — by the public, and by Japan's worried Asian neighbours.

The Liberal Democrats have been trying to vote on the bill in the lower house to show Washington that they tried to send men to sweat alongside American forces in the Gulf. But it is regarded as vulgar and embarrassing in Japan's consensus politics for the government to railroad the bill through the lower house.

Government and opposition MPs were yesterday afternoon still discussing a timetable for a possible vote, at least in the lower house committee. But Socialist MPs said the flawed bill needed further debate.

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Cheyssou fuels fall of deal o hostages

Paris — Speculation since May have engulfed negotiations to release the 52 hostages in Iraq has been fuelled by ambiguous statements from a former French minister (M. Cheyssou) who served under President Mitterrand, but credited in the past with exceptional sensitivity.

Yesterday in *Le Figaro*, Cheyssou specifically mentioned that he had urged the Iraqi government not long before the invasion to allow French nationals to fly home.

At the time, some success was achieved, but whether the success was due to his intervention or to the intervention of others, he did not say.

He also said that he had urged the Iraqi government to allow French nationals to fly home.

He also said that he had urged the Iraqi government to allow French nationals to fly home.

Beirut blast

Beirut — A powerful explosion rocked the city of Beirut yesterday, killing at least 10 people and wounding dozens more.

The explosion occurred in a crowded market area, and the cause is still under investigation.

French refusal

Paris — The French government has refused to accept the terms of a proposed ceasefire in the Gulf region.

The government stated that the terms were not in line with international law and the interests of the region.

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EC subsidies deal 'threatens 60,000 farms in Britain'

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT, AND MICHAEL BINYON IN BRUSSELS

UP TO 60,000 small family farms could be forced out of business in Britain over the next five to ten years if the proposal for cutting farming subsidies, agreed this week by European Community agriculture ministers, is implemented, it was claimed yesterday.

The proposal, for subsidy cuts of 30 per cent over the period 1996-1999, will form part of the EC's negotiating position in the Uruguay Round of world trade talks.

Community officials yesterday began a series of meetings in an attempt to save the tight timetable of world trade negotiations, threatened by community wrangling over the farm package.

In Britain, Sean Rickard, the chief economist of the National Farmers Union, said the logic of the proposal was aimed at controlling over-production of food by progressive cuts in the price support given to farmers under the common agricultural policy (CAP).

That would leave agriculture concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer big farmers and be extremely damaging to the countryside.

"Mr [Raymond] MacSharry [the European agriculture commissioner] has made a ridiculous claim that not one farmer would lose his job as a result of the cuts. It is rubbish

... Why MacSharry has said something he must know he cannot deliver on is beyond me."

Yesterday Frans Andriessen, the external affairs commissioner, met Carla Hills, the US trade representative, and both agreed that the present round of talks under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) must finish as planned next month. The GATT talks will be a central issue at the ministerial meeting here next week between the European Commission and a group of US cabinet members. President Bush is also expected to review the prospects for agreement when he meets Giulio Andreotti, the Italian prime minister, next week.

However, Australian sources in Brussels said they doubted whether the EC offer would survive intact during the negotiations. British consumer groups dismissed the European proposal as minimalist and said it would do little to reduce the cost of supporting farming. They pointed out the subsidy cut between now and 1996 would be only about 15 per cent because the EC argued that the rest of the reduction had already been made.

"What we are really looking at is a subsidy cut of perhaps 2 to 3 per cent a year in each of the next five years," Jill

Johnstone, a senior policy adviser at the National Consumer Council, said. "That will do little to control production or to bring down the cost of the CAP to the household budget."

Mr Rickard said Europe could produce all the food it needed with far fewer farmers. "Already in Britain we have a situation where about 30,000 large farms, representing no more than 11 per cent of all holdings, account for 56 per cent of agricultural production. It is these larger intensively managed units which have the best chance of surviving on lower prices."

"There is no reason why we could not end up with 30,000 farms accounting for 80 per cent of production. What society has to decide is what kind of countryside and agricultural production methods it wants ... the less intensive production is on the smaller family farms that will be forced out of business."

The German Farmers Federation said the deal would be "disastrous for German agriculture", and there was a growing danger of further income cuts for its members.

The opposition Social Democrats and consumers' organisations said that it would mean a higher burden for the taxpayer and consumer.



Party line: Boris Yeltsin, left, Russian Federation president, and President Gorbachev watching the Moscow parade to mark the 1917 revolution. Between them are an unidentified woman and Anatoli Lukyanov, Soviet parliamentary chairman. Shots fired, page 1

Subdued revolutionary show

FROM NICK WORRALL IN KIEV AND MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

THE Soviet armed forces held probably their last traditional Revolution Day parade in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev yesterday. But because of threats of disruption, and public disinterest, it was smaller than usual, more a gesture of defiance than pride.

In Leningrad, members of the ultra-radical Democratic Union and two city councillors were forcibly removed from the monument to Peter

the Great before the military parade, which took place amid tight security. Boris Gidaspov, the city party leader, addressed party members on the need to defend the revolution.

Security precautions in Kiev ensured a smooth event but students again extracted concessions from the conservative authorities, getting the parade moved from central Kiev.

Elsewhere in the Soviet

Union, military parades were held amid heavy security in Vilnius, Lithuania; Tallinn, Estonia; and in all five Central Asian republics. Parades in Armenia and Azerbaijan were cancelled, although a naval parade was held in Baku harbour. The military parade in the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, was held outside the centre. All parades were called off in the Moldavian capital, Kishinyev.

Sudeten Germans still live in hope of compensation

Anne McElvoy considers the prospects for reparations in the "unmentionable" case of Germans expelled from Czechoslovakia

RUDOLF Janauschek, a Berliner, speaks German with the unmistakable quaver and extravagantly rolled Rs of the Czechs. He recently revisited his native land for the first time in 45 years, calling it "the country of my heart, the country that rejected me".

He is a Sudeten German driven out of the Bohemian town of Eger together with three million of his fellow Germans who had settled in the western Czech border lands in the Middle Ages. It was a purge fuelled by revenge and opportunism. The property of the expelled was redistributed by the new communist regime to the

of a certain nation. That was ... simply revenge."

The population at large is anxious not to mention the expulsion but, with the border a mere 50 miles away, things German dominate the conversation. "We need their investment," said one local businessman. "But not at the price of a second takeover — an economic one."

At the elderly Association of Sudeten Germans in Munich, they admit to a lack of interest from the offspring of those expelled, most of whom no longer consider themselves Sudeten Germans. The prospect of compensation for land lost

Czechs.

Herr Janauschek's family home in Saatz was seized and given to a police official before he had even left the country. An architect, he was arrested in May 1945 and accused of collaboration because he had designed buildings on the orders of the nazis. After serving six months at hard labour he fled across the nearby border to Bavaria.

Until the fall of the regime last November, the cause of the Sudeten Germans was little heeded. Their demands for the restitution of their property ranked, according to a German diplomat in Prague, as "the unmentionable, an embarrassment".

Bonn was unwilling to take up a case which would remind the world of the events of 1938. Post-war Germany was forced to accept the mass expulsion as its punishment and had resigned itself to letting the matter be. But when Hans Dietrich Genscher, the German foreign minister, visited Prague last Friday he agreed with President Havel that it was now time to place the Sudeten question back on the agenda. The low-key agreement means that both sides now acknowledge the unfinished business of the second world war. It was the uncompromising Mr Havel who first mentioned the unmentionable. "We were infected by the bacillus of evil," he told President von Weizsäcker of Germany. "We expelled people not only on the basis of proven guilt but simply as members



Havel: first mentioned the unmentionable

to the Czech state in 1945 may soon change that.

Manfred Riedel, the Sudeten Germans' spokesman, admits that restitution is impossible after 45 years but wants to see compensation on the model of what was done in East Germany. "A great injustice was done to us," he said. "That has been suppressed for too long to keep the peace. Why should Germans from the east be compensated and Sudeten Germans not?"

The difference is that it is the united German state which will pay compensation to former owners of property in the east with no extant state left to shoulder the financial and political burden of the atonement. But nobody has yet come up with a convincing explanation of how an economically stricken Czechoslovakia could afford to pay for past injustices to the Sudeten Germans.

Open border plan for hunters' guns

By MICHAEL BINYON

AT A TIME of mounting debate over hunting in Britain, European Community ministers are being asked today to let blood sports enthusiasts roam the community with their guns, unhindered by border checks.

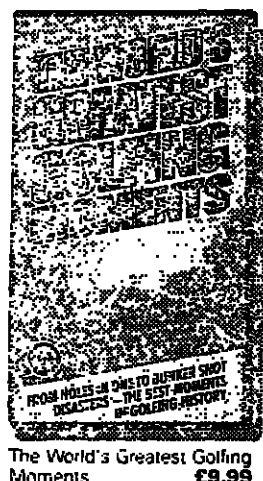
Trade ministers meeting in Brussels will look at proposals to allow anyone wanting to shoot game in another member state to do so without prior consent. Common regulations have to be agreed before the removal of frontier controls, so that hunters can legally take their guns across un-manned borders.

Britain, however, is likely to insist on strict controls and the continued right of inspection, after the Hungerford shooting rampage and because of concern about terrorist gun-running. Britain will demand that anyone from continental Europe wanting to bring in his

guns first find a British sponsor or to apply on his behalf to the local police.

The European Commission is trying to work out a system of notification that is not too bureaucratic. It proposes that anyone wanting to hunt abroad would have to inform the local authorities that granted the original licence. They in turn would have to notify their counterparts in the region where the hunt is to be organised. No prior permission for the transport of guns would be needed as long as the hunter held a "European firearms certificate".

Britain doubts that such a system would work. The commission and the European Parliament have already agreed that countries such as Britain and Ireland that are demanding prior permission should be allowed to keep their regulations.



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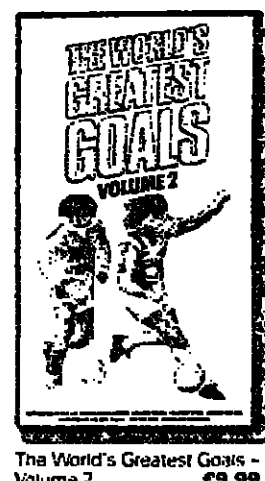
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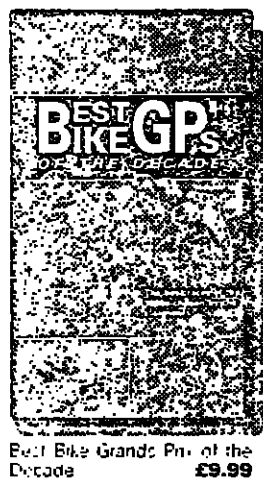


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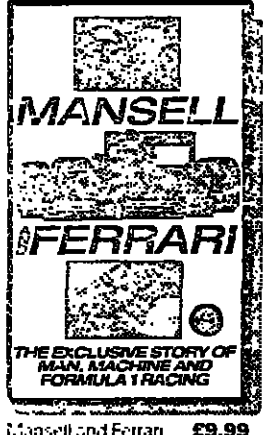


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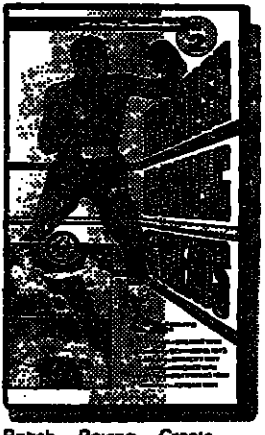
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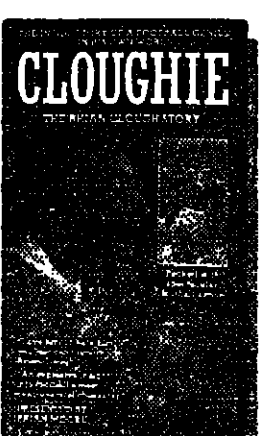
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Hirohito 'allowed attack on US for fear of civil war'

By DAVID WATTS AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

HIROHITO, the late emperor of Japan, told aides that he did not oppose the military's plan to attack the United States in 1941 because he feared a devastating civil war, according to documents released yesterday.

In an eight-hour conversation in the spring of 1946, when allied occupation forces were considering whether the emperor should be charged with war crimes, Hirohito also denied, in perhaps the clearest terms ever, that he was a living god, according to a transcript. The conversation was apparently part of the preparations for a trial.

The Japan Broadcasting Corporation said that the transcript of the conversation was made by Hironari Terasaki, a former diplomat who translated for the emperor in some of his meetings

with Douglas MacArthur, supreme commander of the allied powers during the post-war occupation of Japan.

"If I had tried to veto the beginning of the Pacific war, a coup d'état would have occurred, and my trusted aides would have been killed. My life also could not have been guaranteed," Hirohito said, referring to a meeting in December 1941 when the attack decision was made.

"Even if that were acceptable, a violent civil war would have occurred, resulting in a tragedy several times worse than the recent (second world) war, and leading to circumstances that the war would not have ended. I believe that Japan would have been destroyed," he said, according to the transcript.

This new information on the late emperor's attitude clarifies what many historians

have thought was an ambivalent period in which he appeared to endorse the military's drive to war. Westerners have for some time failed to understand why he did not stand by his opposition to the war by resisting the military even at the risk of his life. Judging by this transcript, he had his eye on an even longer span of history and was considering the fact that, should he oppose his government on such a fundamental question, it would discredit the throne and probably throw the country into a new period of the tribalism from which it had, conclusively emerged only during his father's reign.

The broadcasting corporation quoted Hirohito as saying he did not stop the war because he feared the public might believe the government had given in to the United States, despite a strong army and navy.

Neither at that time of turbulence, nor later, did he say much about his wartime role despite a widespread belief abroad that he should be held responsible for failing to restrain his military.

Hirohito always maintained that, as a constitutional monarch, he could not intervene in the war plans of his government. In fact, he was never charged with war crimes because the Americans took a political decision that he could play a more important role in unifying Japan than in paying a futile price for the past.

Professor Otis Cary, of Doshisha University, Kyoto, and an acquaintance of the emperor, said that to his knowledge the emperor had never previously referred to a possible coup. In contrast, he added, Hirohito had taken a strong role in putting down a coup attempt within the army in 1936.

"But, by December 1941, the situation was so tight, the military had complete hold on the government," Professor Cary said. "The emperor just held his peace."

The transcript quotes Hirohito as telling his aides that it was "troubling" for him to be referred to as a living god. The Kyodo News Service said the transcript recorded the emperor as saying: "Biologically, I have the same body as ordinary people, so I am not a god." Although Hirohito is considered to have renounced his divinity in a New Year's message in 1946, Japanese right-wingers maintain that the Japanese translation of his remarks, which were originally written in English and probably intended primarily for Western consumption, does not explicitly deny his pre-war status as a Shinto god.

The Japan Broadcasting Corporation said that when Terasaki died, the transcripts of the conversation were given to his daughter, Mariko Terasaki Miller, who lives in the United States and recently rediscovered them.

Muslims fearful of Hindu tide

Muslims' worries are multiplied by the defeat of V.P. Singh, seen as their ally against militant Hindus, writes Christopher Thomas

THESE are uncertain times in Matia Mahal in the heart of the teeming Muslim quarter of Delhi. Riot police are on standby and cheap hotels are packed with people seeking sanctuary from the threatening Hindu world outside. "Hindus don't like us, they tell us to go to Pakistan," people say. It is lunchtime, and Fazal ur Rehman is serving dal and huge chunks of buffalo meat at his smoke-blackened stall in the chaotic central market area. The giant Jama Masjid (mosque) casts its shadow over the street.

Mr Rehman says that every Muslim supported Vishwanath Pratap Singh, who yesterday offered his resignation as prime minister after losing a confidence vote in the Lok Sabha (lower house). "Muslims support Mr Singh because he is secular," he adds. "And he saved Babri Masjid." The name of Babri Masjid, the 16th-century mosque in the holy city of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, is on everybody's lips in Matia Mahal. The Indian government's fierce determination to save it from Hindu zealots seeking to pull it down had earned Mr Singh the support and gratitude of all the 200,000 Muslims here.

"I am Indian first and Muslim second," Mr Rehman says, spooning out hot lunchtime fare to rickshaw men at three rupees (about 9p) a plateful. "But when my faith is threatened, I am a Muslim first and an Indian second. As soon as they attack my mosque or my shop, I am all Muslim."

There seems to be nothing but contempt for Pakistan among the people of these packed, noisy alleyways, but for all their insecurity there is no talk of migration. "We don't like Pakistanis and they don't like us," says Hasnain Akhtar, aged 30, who runs the Jawa Whar guest house. He says his Hindu friends have stopped talking to him since the latest trouble over the Babri Masjid began. Many people were moving into the safety of the Muslim quarter because they were scared.

Mr Singh, he thinks, is "a gentle, secular man, like the Indian Muslim". Mr Akhtar's children, who attend the local Anglo-Arabic higher secondary school, do not know any Hindus. This is sad, he admits, but adds that there is nothing to be done about it. "Hindus have guns and they are many people. There is great tension with Hindus. Only in our own areas do we feel safe," he says.

India's Muslims, numbering more than 100 million in a country of 853 million,



Sacred mission: a Hindu holy man, one of thousands of devotees and militants gathering in Ayodhya where many have died in efforts to regain a religious site

are the largest Islamic population outside Indonesia and Bangladesh. It is their position that provides the acid test for India's claim to be secular. Yet their mood has rarely been so fearful.

This atmosphere of tension and insecurity lies behind the present political turmoil in Delhi. Many people are worried that the surge of communalism, coupled with an explosion of caste conflict, is tearing at the fabric of Indian society and threatening its secular character. It is a measure of the political power of communalism that the government, barely a year old, has split.

The relatively new phenomenon of Hindu politics is known as *Hindutva* or Hinduness. Its growth, fanned by the opportunism of bodiless like the Bharatiya Janata Party, has been matched by a rise in Islamic fundamentalism in India.

The basic question for Muslims is how far they want to be absorbed into the Indian mainstream, and to

what extent they want to maintain a separate culture in the isolation and insularity of their ghettos. Few Muslims go to college or university, they are greatly under-represented in government and industry, and their level of poverty is disproportionately high.

Most of the educated elite fled to Pakistan at the time of partition in 1947, leaving the illiterate mass of Muslims without leadership or direction, thinly spread across the country and forming a majority only in the state of Kashmir and in a few tiny pockets elsewhere.

Hindu hardliners accused Mr Singh of appeasement of Muslims because of his refusal to allow the storming of the Babri Masjid. Many Hindus complain that Muslims are holding India back by their observance of Islamic personal law, the wearing of purdah and their implacable resistance to family planning.

Until the mid-1970s, Muslims mostly voted for

the Congress (I) party. The tide turned in the future over the forced sterilisation imposed during Indira Gandhi's Emergency. In 1977 the Muslims voted as a body against the party. They have half-heartedly returned to Congress since then, although in last November's poll it is estimated that 60 per cent of Muslims voted for Janata Dal.

Their defection reflected Muslim unease about Congress's attempts to accommodate Hindu extremists over the Babri Masjid by allowing the laying of a foundation stone for a Hindu temple, which sowed the seeds of the present upheaval.

In the next election there may be a strong anti-Congress trend among Muslims because of its fence-sitting over the mosque issue. Politicians, sensing the increasing polarisation between Hinduism and Islam, will be tempted to play the religious card. That would mark a far-reaching turning point for secular India.

Bonn gets details of terror attacks

Bonn — Six of the eight former Red Army Faction terrorists arrested this summer in East Germany have given statements to the state prosecutor which have cleared up the background of nine serious crimes, including an attempt to assassinate General Alexander Haig, when supreme commander of Nato troops in Europe (Ian Murray writes).

Alexander von Stauffenberg, the state prosecutor, said yesterday that the statements covered ten murders, a grenade attack, two assassination attempts, an armed robbery in Zurich, the near-fatal shooting of a policeman in Paris, an explosives attack on an American air base in Ramstein, a kidnapping, and attempted kidnapping.

The state prosecutor was a prime target for the faction and one of Herr von Stauffenberg's predecessors was killed by the terrorists in 1977, while his office had been attacked by grenades in the same year.

The two failed assassination attempts were on General Haig when travelling in a motorcade through Belgium in 1979 and on General Frederick Kroesen, another American, at Heidelberg in 1981. At the time, all that General Haig knew about the attempt on his life was that his motorcade slowed down.

Jet withdrawal

Manila — The United States will remove all fighter aircraft from the Philippines next year, an American embassy statement said. More than 1,800 military personnel are to leave as a result. The statement was issued as Richard Armitage, the American diplomat charged with negotiating an agreement on the future of United States facilities here, including Clark air base, arrived in Manila. (Reuters)

Moving house

Tokyo — The Japanese parliament, in an unprecedented resolution, demanded to be moved out of over-populated Tokyo. Both houses of the Diet voted for similar resolutions, which are non-binding on the government but express urgent concern over congestion in the capital. A number of possible sites have been mentioned for a new parliament, including Mount Fuji. (AP)

22 die in quake

Tehran — A severe earthquake hit mountain villages in southern Iran killing at least 22 people, injuring more than 100, most of them children, and making 12,000 homeless. Tehran Radio said the quake, measuring 6.6 on the open-ended Richter scale and centred on the town of Darab, damaged 18 villages and destroyed 1,550 houses in the Zagros mountains on Tuesday evening. (Reuters)

Emergency lifted

Islamabad — Mian Nawaz Sharif, the prime minister, has lifted the three-month-old state of emergency in his first day on the job. The emergency was imposed on August 6 after Benazir Bhutto's government was dismissed. Mr Sharif said he wanted the new government headed by his Islamic Democratic Alliance to begin in "an open atmosphere of human freedom". (AP)

Reforms wanted

Bucharest — Some of Romania's main opposition groups have formed a coalition to press for radical reforms as the country struggles towards full democracy. The creation of the Civic Alliance was announced in Romania's *Libertate*, the independent daily newspaper, marking the latest effort by the divided opposition to unite against President Iliescu's ruling National Salvation Front. (Reuters)

Up in smoke

Juneau, Alaska — Alaskans have voted to make private possession of marijuana a crime again, striking down the nation's most liberal "pot law". In what amounted to a local referendum on election day, the measure was passed by a vote of 27,538, or 54 per cent, to 23,586, or 46 per cent. For 15 years, Alaskan law has permitted adults to possess less than 4oz of the drug in their homes. (AP)

World closes ranks to fight warming

From MICHAEL MCCARTHY IN GENEVA

THE world community launched its response to global warming yesterday when 137 countries committed themselves to negotiating a treaty protecting the atmosphere by June 1992.

Barely two years after the problem of climate change came to widespread public attention, nations assembled at the World Climate Conference in Geneva unanimously accepted the warning by United Nations scientists that the threat to humanity from the greenhouse effect is unprecedented.

They agreed to draw up an atmosphere convention whose ultimate aim will be to restrict emissions of greenhouse gases, chiefly carbon dioxide, from coal-fired power stations and motor vehicles in every country in the world. Chris Paton, the environment secretary, who represented Britain at the meeting, said

yesterday: "It will make the conventional round of disarmament negotiations look straightforward by comparison."

However, the need to take action was accepted on all sides, and ministers said in their final declaration: "Recognising that climate change is a global problem of unique character, we consider that a global response must be decided and implemented without further delay."

All countries agreed that a basic-framework convention on the atmosphere should be ready for signature at the conference on environment and development to be held in Brazil in June 1992. It will be accompanied, perhaps at a later stage, by binding protocols on greenhouse gas emissions and possibly the destruction of tropical forests.

Nigel Hawkes, page 16

Unradical chic hits Managua

From LINDSEY GRISON IN MANAGUA

THE bourgeoisie is back. It is hip to be rich here, and better yet to flaunt it.

After a decade of revolutionary asceticism, business suits are in, jungle fatigues out, neon graphics in, murals or muscled workers out.

In the six months since the inauguration of President Chamorro, this sweltering city has begun hustling to a different beat. Dance bands have replaced the lonesome revolutionary ballads that used to delight audiences at El Cipitio, a coffee house.

"People used to have a bad

conscience to like and do things that didn't fit the revolutionary scheme," said Marcos Membreno, of the University of Central America. "Now they don't face the threat of being accused of being bourgeois so much."

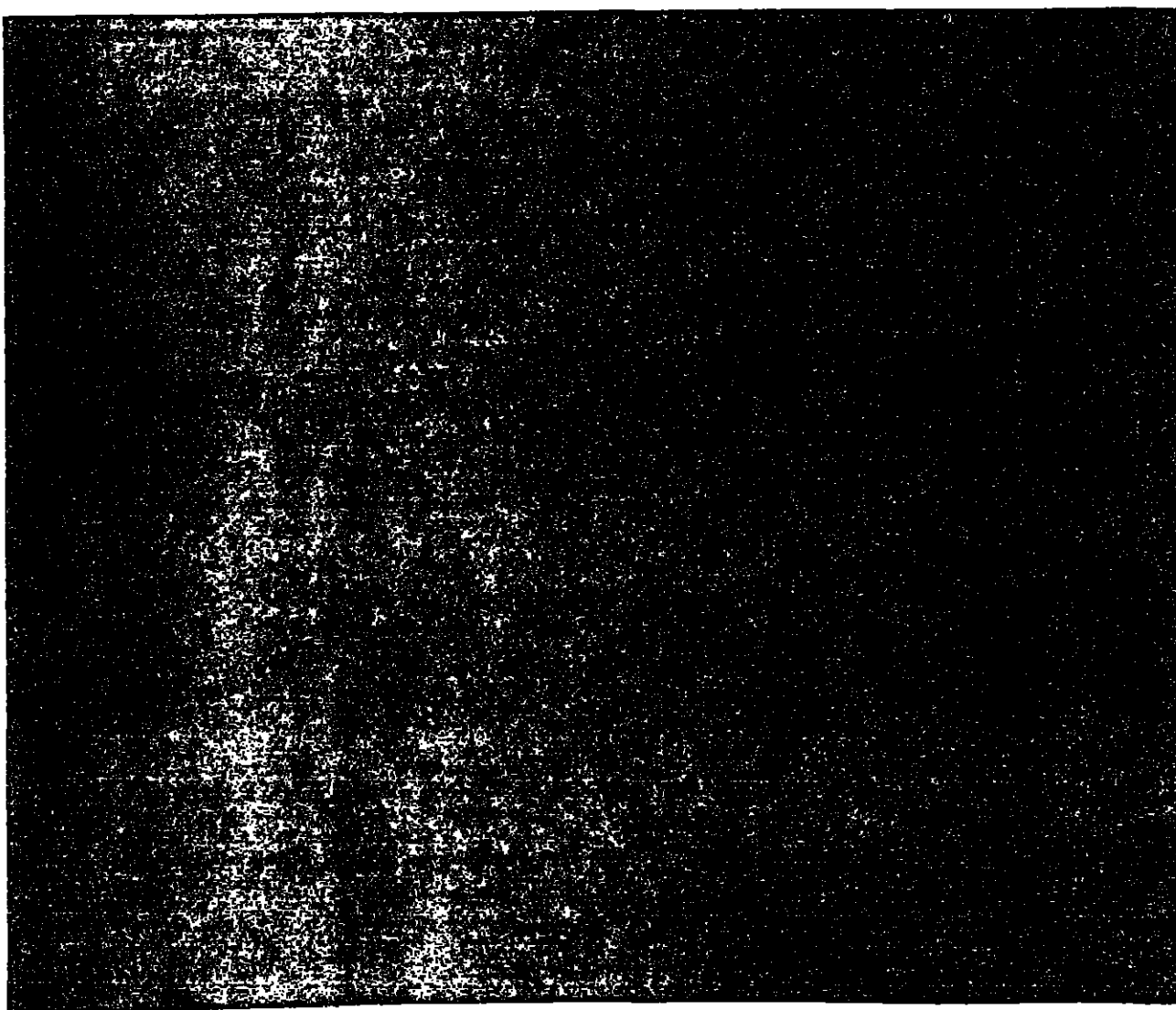
Nicaraguans describe the spruce young men and women who have taken over this class-conscious society as "Miami Boys", although most simply copy new trends from imported magazines.

In something of a constitution boom, Managua hunts to the sound of housing reno-

vation. Rents are rocketing. House owners who asked \$800 (£420) a month in rent four months ago now get \$2,000.

But despite the superficial gloss, Nicaragua remains the hemisphere's poorest country after Haiti. A full-time job remains little more than a fading promise from the Chamorro campaign for about half of all Nicaraguans.

But, government officials maintain that the new-found fashion consciousness shows that attitudes are changing and that their economic programme is taking root.



TO SEE HOW A BLACK SQUARE CAN IMPROVE YOUR TELEVISION PICTURE, TURN BACK A PAGE.

US MID-TERM ELECTIONS

The sullen American votes for caution

THE SENATE

Of the 100 Senate seats, 35 were at stake. The position of the seat and the percentage of votes counted is indicated under the state name. The winner is in bold and candidates are followed by their party and number of votes polled. Incumbents are shown by the date they were first elected in brackets.

Won	Dem	Rep	Ind
Heldovers	18	17	0
Trend	66	44	0
Current	55	45	0
Net Change	+1	-1	0

ALABAMA	Count: 99%
Howard Heflin (78)	D 701,444
Bill Calabrese	R 454,824

ALASKA	Count: 99%
Ted Stevens (88)	R 108,465
Michael Bosley	D 51,995

ARKANSAS	Count: 99%
Bill Clinton (78)	D 374,406
Shirley Nelson	R 279,511

COLORADO	Count: 100%
Richard Lamm (78)	D 568,095
Joe Heath	D 425,453

DELAWARE	Count: 100%
Joseph Biden (72)	D 112,128
Jane Brady	R 64,682

GEORGIA	Count: 99%
Sam Nunn (72)	D 112,128

HAWAII	Count: 100%
Daniel Akaka (80)	D 154,354
Patrick Sali	R 124,189

IDAHO	Count: 99%
Larry Craig	R 178,655
Ron Wagner	D 112,752

ILLINOIS	Count: 99%
Paul Simon (84)	D 2,074,670
Lynn Martin	R 1,119,910

INDIANA	Count: 99%
Dan Coats (88)	R 793,997
Baron Hill	D 684,302

IOWA	Count: 99%
Tom Harkin (84)	D 518,393
Tom Tauke	R 441,768

KANSAS	Count: 99%
N Kassebaum (78)	R 572,177
Dick Williams	D 238,704

KENTUCKY	Count: 99%
Mitch McConnell (84)	R 479,499
Harvey Stone	D 434,339

LOUISIANA	Count: 99%
Bennett Johnston (72)	D 228,714

MAINE	Count: 97%
William Cohen (78)	R 305,481
Nail Rode	D 192,824

MASSACHUSETTS	Count: 91%
John Kerry (84)	D 1,180,210
Jim Rappaport	R 892,724

MICHIGAN	Count: 99%
Carl Levin (78)	D 1,446,630
Bill Schwartz	R 1,039,120

MINNESOTA	Count: 99%
Paul Wellstone	D 859,078
Rudy Boschwitz	R 810,153

MISSISSIPPI	Count: 100%
Max Baucus (78)	D 217,451
Allen Tate	R 93,984

MONTANA	Count: 99%
Max Baucus (78)	D 217,451
Allen Tate	R 93,984

NEBRASKA	Count: 99%
Jim Exon (78)	D 342,313
Hal Daub	R 237,098

NEW HAMPSHIRE	Count: 99%
Robert Smith	R 187,949
John Durkin	D 91,355

NEW JERSEY	Count: 99%
Bill Bradley (78)	D 683,383
Christine Whitman	R 911,247

NEW MEXICO	Count: 99%
Pete Domenici (72)	R 294,226
Tom Benavides	D 109,375

NORTH CAROLINA	Count: 99%
Jesse Helms (72)	R 1,088,570
Harvey Gantt	D 962,533

OKLAHOMA	Count: 99%
David Boren (78)	D 753,716
Stephen Jones	R 148,534

OREGON	Count: 100%
Barbara Boxer (88)	D 541,035
Harry Landis	D 483,438

RHODE ISLAND	Count: 99%
Claiborne Pell (80)	D 218,253
Claudia Schneider	R 133,552

SOUTH CAROLINA	Count: 99%
Strom Thurmond (84)	R 475,399
Bob Cunningham	D 241,826

SOUTH DAKOTA	Count: 99%
Larry Pressler (78)	R 133,745
David Steig	D 114,555

TENNESSEE	Count: 100%
Frank Lautner (84)	D 228,330
Hugh Permer	D 1,422,680

TEXAS	Count: 99%
Phil Gramm (84)	R 2,289,390
William Hawkins	D 1,422,680

VIRGINIA	Count: 99%
John Warner (78)	R 872,764
Nancy Spansus	D 196,257

WEST VIRGINIA	Count: 100%
Jay Rockefeller (84)	D 274,614
John Yoder	R 126,036

WYOMING	Count: 100%
Al Simpson (78)	R 100,800
Kathy Halling	D 55,652

The sullen American was the dominant figure in the 1990 elections. Voters were both cautious and angry, providing poll results which entrench the problems of governing their country.

The gap between Republican president and Democratic Congress widened. The margins were small — by one seat in the Senate and by at least eight in the House — but the trend is still ominous for the Republicans, who went into the poll with a record low level of House representation.

If President Bush is re-elected in 1992 — and he still is the clear favourite — he will face a Congress made up from newly drawn districts. Because of Republican losses in the governors' races in Texas and Florida, the enlarged delegations from those states are more likely to be Democrat.

In Austin and Tallahassee, there is nothing to stay the gerrymander's hand. Although the Republicans were satisfied to win a key governorship in Ohio and hold one in Illinois, the Democrats will also dominate the machinery for redrawing the political boundaries in New Jersey, Oklahoma and New Mexico.

The governors' races were always likely to be more volatile since it is harder for a governor to distance himself from difficult issues. Voters may be angry at Congress as a whole, but that does not mean they are necessarily opposed to their own congressman. In races for the House and Senate they want to "throw the bums out" though not their own "bum". In the race for the local governor's mansion, the only "bum" they have is their own.

The defeats of Florida governor Bob Martinez, whose campaign was managed by the president's son, Jeb, and Texas front-runner Clayton Williams, whose opponent Ann Richards is an old enemy of the White House, were personal knocks to the president, who had campaigned hard for both men. In Florida, the success of the former Democrat, Senator Lawton Chiles, was based on his self-styled financial prudence. In Texas, Clayton Williams proved that a campaign can be

Despite predictions of an election upset, most incumbents held on to their seats, Peter Stothard, US Editor, reports from Washington. Although the gap between Republican president and Democrat Congress has widened, moderate influence is likely to be strengthened



Texas star: Ann Richards triumphs in a dirty campaign that was too expensive and too negative for most of the voters

too expensive and too negative for voters' tastes.

The big Republican winner in Tuesday's poll was Pete Wilson, who won a careful, copybook campaign to become the next governor of California, the biggest gerrymander's prize of all in the state which in 1992 will control 20 per cent of the votes needed to win the presidency. If the Republicans had lost against the charismatic Democrat, Dianne Feinstein, it would have overshadowed everything else. But after a long tense count Senator Wilson's skillful appeal to supporters of capital punishment, abortion and moderate environmentalism prevailed. The Republican had vigorously supported the successful local proposition to limit the terms of state representatives. The Democrat had backed the extremist "Big Green" environmental proposition, which failed because of fears of its economic impact. There were worries in the White House that Mr Wilson

and university president John Silber, the only candidate to be more outspoken than Clayton Williams in this campaign, was overruled in the final days by the partisan Republican: William Weld.

Across depressed New England, Americans were particularly irritable, electing an independent governor, Lowell Weicker, in Connecticut and the first socialist representative for 30 years in Vermont.

Although no single theme dominated the elections for the House of Representatives, one-third of the Senate and 36 governorships, the result is likely to strengthen moderate influence in both parties. Congressional races were mostly closer than in previous years. As the more careful commentators have predicted, a mood of opposition to incumbents did not result in many office-holders losing their seats, merely in their holding on by narrower margins.

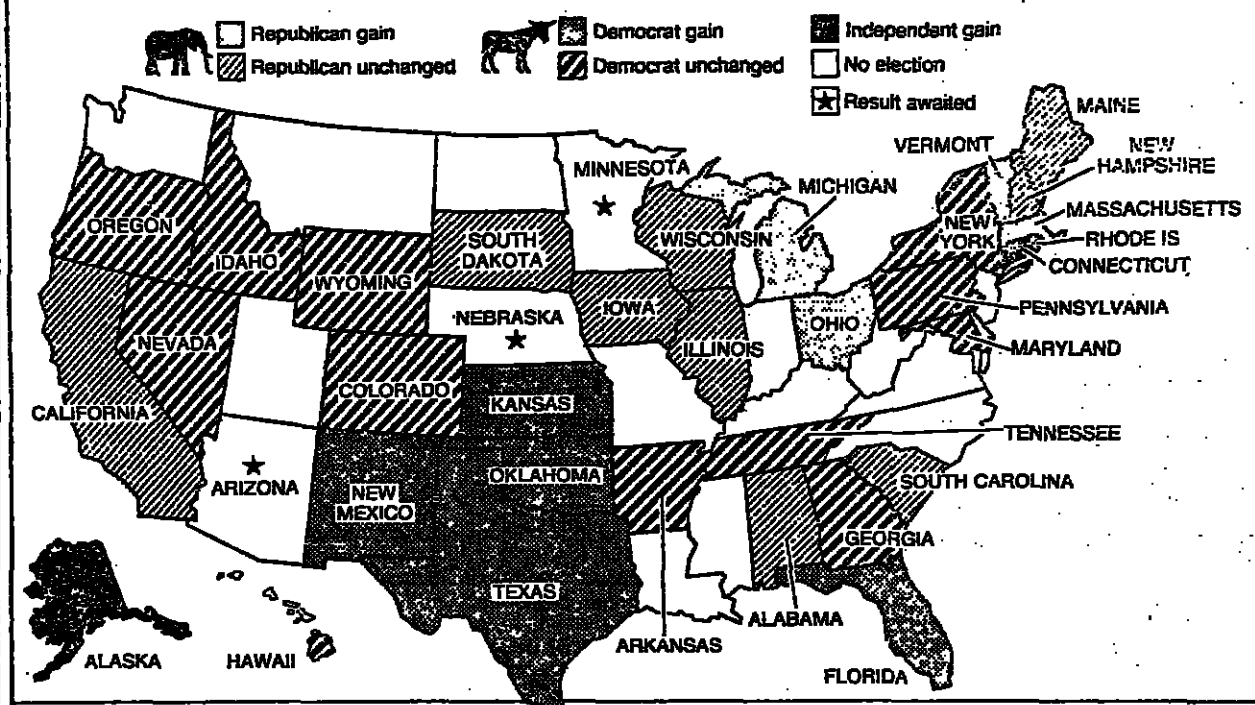
Several senators who had been thought targets survived with ease. Paul Simon in Illinois comprehensively defeated Republican Lynn Martin, a close friend of George Bush who may be compensated with a place in the cabinet. Senator Claiborne Pell defeated Claudia Schneider, his Republican challenger for the Rhode Island Senate seat. Mr Pell's prominence as chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee helped him in a race where voters preferred experience to risk.

In the insiders' "classic" race — between Democrat incumbent Tom Harkin and Republican Tom Tauke for the Senate seat in Iowa, the result was a blow for the insiders who had called it so close, and easy victory for Mr Harkin. Another blow to fashionable opinion was the easy victory of the veteran conservative, Jesse Helms, over the black Democrat candidate, Harvey Gantt.

The sight of the modest liberal politics teacher, Paul Wellstone, sitting in the Minnesota seat of their popular power-broking colleague, Republican Rudy Boschwitz, may make many oldtimers say to themselves: "Me next?"

Leading article, page 17

GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION RESULTS



THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Won	Dem	Rep	Ind
Leading	267	165	0
Trend	268	167	1
Current	258	176	0
Net Change	+9	-10	+1

ALABAMA	Count: 99%
1 R Harbert Calhoun (84)	
2 D Morris Lohr (84)	
3 D Bob Stump (79)	
4 R Jim Kolbe (84)	

ALASKA	Count: 99%
1 R Don Young (73)	

ARIZONA	Count: 99%
1 D John McCain (84)	
2 D Robert Montoya (84)	
3 D John McCain (84)	
4 R Jim Kolbe (84)	

ARKANSAS	Count: 99%
1 D Bill Alexander (88)	
2 R Ray Thornton (81)	
3 R J Harrison Schmitt (86)	
4 D Beryl Anthony (78)	

CALIFORNIA	Count: 99%
1 R George Deukmejian (82)	
2 R George Deukmejian (82)	
3 D George Deukmejian (82)	
4 D George Deukmejian (82)	

COLORADO	Count: 99%
1 D Patricia Schroeder (72)	
2 D Patricia Schroeder (72)	
3 D Patricia Schroeder (72)	
4 D Patricia Schroeder (72)	

CONNECTICUT	Count: 99%
1 D Barbara Kennedy (82)	
2 D Barbara Kennedy (82)	
3 D Barbara Kennedy (82)	
4 D Barbara Kennedy (82)	

DELAWARE	Count: 99%
1 D Thomas Carper (82)	

FLORIDA	Count: 99%
1 D Earl Hutto (78)	
2 D Earl Hutto (78)	
3 D Earl Hutto (78)	
4 D Earl Hutto (78)	

GEORGIA	Count: 99%
1 D Lindsey Thomas (82)	
2 D Lindsey Thomas (82)	
3 D Lindsey Thomas (82)	
4 D Lindsey Thomas (82)	

HAWAII	Count: 99%
1 D Neil Abernethy (71)	
2 D Patsy Mink (86)	

IDAHO	Count: 99%
1 D Larry LaRocco (71)	
2 D Richard Stallings (84)	

ILLINOIS	Count: 99%
1 D Charles Hayes (85)	
2 D Charles Hayes (85)	
3 D Charles Hayes (85)	
4 D Charles Hayes (85)	

INDIANA	Count: 99%
1 D Wayne Gilchrest (71)	
2 D Wayne Gilchrest (71)	
3 D Wayne Gilchrest (71)	
4 D Wayne Gilchrest (71)	

LOUISIANA	Count: 99%
1 D Robert Livingston (77)	
2 D Robert Livingston (77)	
3 D Robert Livingston (77)	
4 D Robert Livingston (77)	

MAINE	Count: 99%
1 D Thomas Andrews (72)	
2 D Thomas Andrews (72)	
3 D Thomas Andrews (72)	
4 D Thomas Andrews (72)	

MARYLAND	Count: 99%
1 D Wayne Gilchrest (71)	
2 D Wayne Gilchrest (71)	
3 D Wayne Gilchrest (71)	
4 D Wayne Gilchrest (71)	

MASSACHUSETTS	Count: 99%
1 R Silvio Conte (58)	
2 R Silvio Conte (58)	
3 R Silvio Conte (58)	
4 R Silvio Conte (58)	

MISSISSIPPI	Count: 99%
1 D James Whitman (41)	
2 D James Whitman (41)	
3 D James Whitman (41)	
4 D James Whitman (41)	

MINNESOTA	Count: 99%
1 D Timothy Penny (82)	
2 D Timothy Penny (82)	
3 D Timothy Penny (82)	
4 D Timothy Penny (82)	

MONTANA	Count: 99%
1 D Patrick Williams (78)	
2 D Patrick Williams (78)	
3 D Patrick Williams (78)	
4 D Patrick Williams (78)	

NEBRASKA	Count: 99%
1 D Douglas Bosworth (78)	
2 D Douglas Bosworth (78)	
3 D Douglas Bosworth (78)	
4 D Douglas Bosworth (78)	

NEVADA	Count: 99%
1 R Bob Dickinson (81)	
2 R Bob Dickinson (81)	
3 R Bob Dickinson (81)	
4 R Bob Dickinson (81)	

NEW HAMPSHIRE	Count: 99%
1 D Joseph Keefe (71)	
2 D Joseph Keefe (71)	
3 D Joseph Keefe (71)	
4 D Joseph Keefe (71)	

NEW JERSEY	Count: 99%
1 D Robert Andrews (81)	
2 D Robert Andrews (81)	
3 D Robert Andrews (81)	
4 D Robert Andrews (81)	

NEW MEXICO	Count: 99%
1 R Steven Schiff (88)	
2 R Steven Schiff (88)	
3 R Steven Schiff (88)	
4 R Steven Schiff (88)	

NEW YORK	Count: 99%
1 D G J Hochbrucker (85)	
2 D G J Hochbrucker (85)	
3 D G J Hochbrucker (85)	
4 D G J Hochbrucker (85)	

OHIO	Count: 99%
1 D Charles Lukan (82)	
2 D Charles Lukan (82)	
3 D Charles Lukan (82)	
4 D Charles Lukan (82)	

OKLAHOMA	Count: 99%
1 R James Inhofe (88)	
2 R James Inhofe (88)	
3 R James Inhofe (88)	
4 R James Inhofe (88)	

OREGON	Count: 99%
1 D Les AuCoin (74)	
2 D Les AuCoin (74)	
3 D Les AuCoin (74)	
4 D Les AuCoin (74)	

PENNSYLVANIA	Count: 99%
1 D Thomas Foglia (80)	
2 D Thomas Foglia (80)	
3 D Thomas Foglia (80)	
4 D Thomas Foglia (80)	

RHODE ISLAND	Count: 99%
1 D Ronald Macchietti (88)	
2 D Ronald Macchietti (88)	
3 D Ronald Macchietti (88)	
4 D Ronald Macchietti (88)	

SOUTH CAROLINA	Count: 99%
1 R Arthur Ravenel (88)	
2 R Arthur Ravenel (88)	
3 R Arthur Ravenel (88)	
4 R Arthur Ravenel (88)	

SOUTH DAKOTA	Count: 99%
1 D Timothy Johnson (86)	

TENNESSEE	Count: 99%
1 R James Quillen (82)	
2 R James Quillen (82)	
3 R James Quillen (82)	
4 R James Quillen (82)	

TEXAS	Count: 99%
1 D Jim Chapman (85)	
2 D Jim Chapman (85)	
3 D Jim Chapman (85)	
4 D Jim Chapman (85)	

UTAH	Count: 99%
1 R James Hansen (80)	
2 R James Hansen (80)	
3 R James Hansen (80)	
4 R James Hansen (80)	

VERMONT	Count: 99%
1 R Richard Shelton (82)	
2 R Richard Shelton (82)	
3 R Richard Shelton (82)	
4 R Richard Shelton (82)	

VIRGINIA	Count: 99%
1 R Herbert Bateman (82)	
2 R Herbert Bateman (82)	
3 R Herbert Bateman (82)	
4 R Herbert Bateman (82)	

De Klerk's silent friends

Shaun Johnson

South Africans will be watching today's result of the Randburg by-election for evidence of a further drift in white support from the reform programme of President F.W. de Klerk to the old certainties of the pro-apartheid Conservative party. More telling for the country's future is the reaction of the black population to the most recent reform: last month's desegregation of public facilities. The response has been calm, almost bylined.

It is a measure of just how profound is South Africa's transition that the repeal of the separate amenities legislation, effective from midnight on October 15, should have meant so little to the black majority. Their reaction to the Discriminatory Legislation Repeal Bill (to give it its official title) suggests a much deeper understanding of the processes under way in South Africa than does that of right-wing whites fighting an ugly but doomed rearguard battle against the inevitable.

Access to swimming pools, libraries, smarter buses and cleaner public lavatories means precious little to black citizens who have their eye on a bigger prize: the vote, and ultimate power. They have waited for the better part of four decades, and can wait a little longer.

There have been a few token "swim-ins" and "read-ins" by blacks at pools and libraries in small towns, but in general lack of interest prevails. The African National Congress called, somewhat half-heartedly, on its members to make a point of using facilities previously barred to them, but in the end more newspaper reporters than citizens bothered to test the waters.

Within the chambers of the 102 councils controlled by the Conservative party in Transvaal province, the reaction has been very different. Whites to the right of de Klerk's ruling National party place tremendous symbolic store on the fact of being forced to rub shoulders with their black neighbours. The result has been a flurry of bureaucratic antics, astoundingly small-minded and pitifully futile.

The Springs town council shut down its swimming pool rather than grant entry to blacks. Dr Pieter Gous, Conservative MP for Bothaville, says he will do the same if there is a single racial conflict. "We can do without the swimming pool." In Sasiburg, only those who carry a "season ticket" are permitted to swim: season tickets are issued to local ratepayers, and local ratepayers are by definition whites. At Vanderbijlpark, would-be swimmers must produce their latest water and light accounts, or pay a punitive fee.

Membership of Bethal's library suddenly costs £100 a year for "non-residents" and practically nothing for local whites. "Non-resident" borrowers from

Withank's library must pay a £4 deposit on a book. Newcastle's library will simply refuse to enrol any new members, preferring to have patrons die off and dwindle rather than admit blacks. Blacks wishing to relieve themselves at Secunda's shopping centre can choose to do so free in their "own" toilets, or pay 10p for the privilege of using the whites' porcelain next door. The lavatory attendant, Miss Maria Botha, disarmingly says "my job is not to open the toilets for black people."

Other councils have chosen to "privatise" local resorts, spas and caravan parks, hoping thereby to evade the new law. Then there are the municipal by-laws, which allow officials to eject any person who, in the opinion of an official, is "causing unpleasant or offensive smells" or "fighting, shouting, arguing, or singing". In the rural backwaters, these will be applied unambiguously.

The government at least has taken the Conservative party seriously, issuing dark warnings to the diehards. "I want to warn town councils that if they try funny tricks in an attempt to get around the full implications of the scrapping of this act," said Mr Harnus Kriel, the minister of planning and provincial affairs, "they may be taken to court."

By contrast, instead of anger, many blacks have chosen to greet the Conservatives' contortions with a measure of pity, and even wit. A teacher interviewed in the township of Kgotsong, abutting Bothaville, said he had no intention of booking space in the white cemetery. "No, we don't want to share their graveyard," he smiled. "Whites don't respect the dead in the same way that we do." Still others have set about purchasing the obsolete racist signs, souvenirs of what they delightedly call "separate inabilities".

This is all good news for President de Klerk. The sky has not fallen in with the scrapping of the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, and the pockets of white resistance will surely shrink. In the main metropolitan areas such as Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, segregation has in any event been dying of its own accord.

The reform constitutes another step toward the unthinkable, and, if incidents of racial friction can be contained, it further smoothes the way to substantive constitutional negotiations. There will indeed be sporadic clashes, but they come nowhere near constituting the "third Boer war" promised by Dr Andries Treurnicht, the Conservatives' leader.

In their blasé response, black South Africans have done Mr de Klerk a great favour. So have his white opponents on the far right: by fighting tooth and nail for the retention of racist laws, they have distracted attention from the fact that it was his government that imposed them in the first place.

...and moreover

CLEMENT FREUD

"DEAR Member of The Kikak Club," I wrote to the 46 young women whose names I had been given by their secretary. "Last month I had the honour of addressing you at your Berkeley Square meeting; I write now to ask a favour: I am president of the Down's Syndrome Association and on November 16 we are holding a ball at the Natural History Museum. I should be immensely grateful if you would try to help this worthy cause, either personally or by persuading your employer to buy programme advertising, provide a gift for the tombola, possibly purchase a ticket or two. I enjoyed meeting you; I look forward to your reply."

From the 46 letters to well-heeled (also well-soled and immaculately connected) — one was called Heseline — I received a single response. A mummy wrote to say she had opened the communication addressed to her daughter "who has gone to China for 18 months", an extreme view, you might agree, of bypassing a charitable request.

At the next gathering of the Ball committee I reported an unqualified failure in my fund-raising attempts — but bought a table for 10 for £1,000. If the president of an association does not make that sort of gesture, how can he expect others to do so? A wonderfully generous supporter gave as a raffle prize a rail journey on the Queen of Scots, and we agreed to meet again in May. I wrote to a number of shops like Swaine, Adeney, Briggs & Sons, who owe me a shooting stick and replies to two letters. Swaine, Adeney, Briggs and their sons showed admirable consistency: they now owe me a shooting stick and replies to 14 letters. Aquascutum was generous to a fault. By the June meeting we had sold 24 of the 40 tables, eight pages of advertising, and discussed gifts for the tombola. Committee members had persuaded local restaurants to donate dinner-and-wine vouchers. Cuddly toys, silk scarves, costume jewellery and a television set had appeared. In July we agreed our booking of Marti Webb in cabaret and that of a famous band to provide dance music. Against all my arguments a toastmaster was engaged.

I came across a colour supplement article on "Ball Queens", featuring eminent ladies who made a habit of organising charity balls. I noticed they were all younger than I and had more hair and were more successful. Stung, I wrote 10 letters to prestigious West End restaurants asking them to donate dinners for two, enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelopes to embarrass them. Five said yes, only two using my envelope; one said no, and four did not reply. I rang the one who said no and said "what do you mean no?" He said "All right then, yes." I called the four who had not replied. They all agreed to contribute.

By late August we had 95 prizes; we needed 200 in order to sell 800 tickets at £5 and give putters a one in four chance of success. In September it began to get better: George Walker of William Hill contributed a race-course champagne lunch and free bets. Virgin Airways — may their virginity never diminish — donated a munificent prize of two flights to New York, accommodation in a luxury hotel and tickets for a Broadway show.

Having spent a day in a distillery near Inverness and drunk malt whisky until I fell over, it occurred to me that malt whisky men might represent a source of untapped generosity. I spoke to John Milroy of Greek Street, purveyor of wines and stockist of more single malts than anyone; took him to lunch to which he brought his brother, author of the malt almanac, and as a consequence I wrote to the Keepers of the Quach, an organisation set up by the industry with the long-term aim of supporting charities. Of 18 firms to whom I wrote I received 14 positive replies, averaging four bottles per company. It was like discovering the philosopher's stone. Rare old malts streamed south like homing pigeons.

With eight days to go we have more than 260 prizes, all our tables are sold, but we could still do with an auctioneer to obtain inflated prices for lunch with Esther Rantzen in the BBC canteen; Tea with Claire Rayner at the Savoy; Snooker with Rex Williams; Dinner with me. Perhaps I will get into next year's Ball Queen list.

Nigel Hawkes, science editor, accuses Mrs Thatcher of accepting cant on global warming

Is this really a scientist speaking?

In her address to the World Climate Conference on Tuesday, Mrs Thatcher made a remark that chills the blood. "We must not waste time and energy disputing the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climatic Change," she said, "or debating the right machinery for making progress." Instead, sacrifices in people's lives were essential, and precautionary action should begin at once to counter the threat of global warming.

Is this a scientist speaking? The prime minister makes much of her background in chemistry, and enjoys long seminars in Downing Street at which some of Britain's brighter brains are called in to brief her on issues like genetic engineering. Somewhere along the way she seems to have abandoned her scientific scepticism and adopted the simple clichés of the environmental activists.

The truth is that there are many things in the IPCC report that must be disputed, energetically. As a scientific hypothesis, man-made global warming is plausible but unproven. The scientists closest to the subject make clear their un-

certainies at every opportunity, but in the dash towards international action doubts have been forgotten, caveats ignored, and a scientific theory given the status of an ideology.

The development of the science of global warming has followed a familiar pattern, seen before in the limits-to-growth debate of the early Seventies and the nuclear-winter brouhaha in the Eighties. All three are based on predictions made by computer models, a notoriously slippery branch of lower mathematics.

In the two earlier cases, the models first produced a really frightening scenario. As time passed and the models were refined, the predictions diminished until they disappeared or were forgotten in the rush of a new controversy. Very much the same has been happening to the global warming models. The dogmatic statements which set the whole caravan on the move have been trimmed and toned down as further work has been done. The scientific working group of the IPCC is now claiming only a 1°C rise by 2025 if we pursue business

as usual — far less than was predicted even two years ago. The group now forecasts a rise in sea-level of 20 cm by 2030, again much lower than earlier estimates.

Remarkably, the IPCC's working group two, whose job was to assess the potential impacts of climatic change, has not taken these second thoughts into account. Its report is based on 1988 figures, and talks glibly of sea-level rises between half a metre and two metres. The only document that many politicians at Geneva this week will read is the policymakers' summary of working group three (which was set up to discuss responses). This concentrates on the effects of sea level rises of a metre or more, although the latest figures suggest this will not come about until well into the century after next.

More important, perhaps, is the question of whether even the lower estimates can be trusted. Much is made of the fact that they are agreed by 190 scientists, or 300, or as many as you like; but that is irrelevant, for science is not a democracy which advances by weight of numbers. Millions of

people believed in the truth of Karl Marx's theories, but it did not make them true.

The acid test of any model is whether it can mimic reality. Industrialisation began in the second half of the 18th century, so we now have at least 200 years' experience of pumping carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Can the computer models match the actual experience of those 200 years? They cannot. They predict a much higher rate of warming than has been observed, clearly indicating that there is some complicating factor absent from the models.

In particular, they fail to account for a prolonged period of cooling running from the Twenties to the Sixties, just when industrial activity was getting into full swing around the world. This was the trend that led many climatologists in the Seventies to forecast an ice age, in some cases, the very same men who now claim the world is heating up uncontrollably.

The situation, then, is this. Computer models predicting temperature rises very much smaller than their proven margins of error

are being used by a prime minister who claims to be a scientist as grounds for imposing economic sacrifices on the entire world. Millions agree with her or urge even greater sacrifices. It fair takes the breath away.

Global warming has turned into an inverted pyramid of implications resting on a handful of facts. A former American presidential science adviser, Eugene Skolnikoff, now professor of political science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, puts it this way: "In essence, elements of the scientific community have reached a judgment based on limited evidence and imperfect models that has massive implications for the health of the economic system and for the fate of peoples and of nations."

Fortunately, the human appetite for sacrifices is limited and its attention-span is short. A couple of cold winters will take the froth off the debate, and allow us the time we need to discover whether or not the earth is really warming up. Meanwhile, the overheated rhetoric in Geneva is premature and potentially very damaging.

Let the saver put his money where his mattress is



Bernard Levin checks the accounts and questions the right of banks to be considered safe repositories of cash

I do not think I have ever before offered my readers a suggestion for an investment, and I do not normally buy and sell shares, let alone speculate in them. But my recommendation today is so promising, indeed virtually fail-safe, that I urge you all to plunge — certainly I shall be doing so myself.

Mattresses! Get a list of mattress-makers, tick the ones with shares traded on the Stock Exchange, chalk your name and address on the soles of your boots, and dive in. Remortgage your home, pawn your furniture, forge your great-aunt's will — put every penny you can lay hands on into mattresses; six months hence you will be looking at the colour photographs of your 32-room mansion in the Bahamas. I tell you, friends, we can't lose.

Why can't we lose? Because there will soon be the greatest rush on a single commodity since the Klondike. Yes, yes, you say, but why mattresses? Because the people of this country (and of others, particularly the United States) will be, in their tens of millions, seeking a really safe refuge for their money, and it is well known that putting your money under the mattress is the most secure form of saving ever devised.

True, you receive no interest, but that is a small price to pay for the warm, happy feelings of satisfaction and security you will experience every time you get into bed and realise that your money is not in a bank.

Where did the world — the advanced world, anyway — get the idea that banks were prudent, efficient institutions, run by people of judgment, intelligence, knowledge and understanding? This grotesque and dangerous myth has made its way into the very language. "You can bank on it," "It's money in the bank," "Safe as the Bank of England." The words "bank manager" conjure up a sober-suited middle-aged man adept at putting his fingertips together, dispensing wisdom and looking pained, if not horrified, at the suggestion of an overdraft.

At that level, there is something in it; the young lady behind the window is most unlikely to urge you to put your life savings in Flybynight-Roulette-wheel Securities plc, registered in the Cayman Islands, and the leading source of

moonbeams extracted from cucumbers. But I have little doubt that the boards of directors, the men who actually own, run and manage the banks are at this moment putting the final touches to a tastefully designed brochure, which will go out as a mailshot to all customers, suggesting they should buy a substantial slice of Polly Peck, at most advantageous prices. Many commentators, including me, have tried to estimate the total sum that our "Big Four" banks threw away in the form of loans to the most corrupt and incompetent Third World leaders, loans which were at all intents unsecured, unexamined, unsafe and in the end unrecoverable. The most likely figure I have seen is £2 billion, though that record is easily beaten by the American banks, with their delightful anyone-can-play game called Savings and Loans. The rules of that game were simple: people put all they had into the banks, and the banks failed to notice that it was immediately stolen.

Of course, the "Big Four" and

the "S & L" are not strictly separate; banking today is international. Our banks, therefore, damaged American ones while the American ones were damaging ours, a satisfactory state of affairs, providing as it does the greatest and most numerous opportunities for banks on both sides of the Atlantic to devise, patent and exchange new ways of losing their customers' money and their own.

But the latest stunner our banks have come up with is surely their most magnificent; indeed, in the annals of human folly it must already occupy an honoured place, secure to the remotest posterity.

It all began in Hammersmith, of all places. Somebody went to the local authority there with a plan for "interest-rate swap options".

The councillors, as one cried: "Of course, interest-rate swap options — where's the scheme? We think of it before!"

Now it is virtually certain that not one of the elected representatives of the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham had

even the slightest idea what interest-rate swap options were. (Pause for old army joke. Sergeant to his squad: "Gawd knows why, the brass have decided you should have some cultural lectures, and the first one is on Keats. But it's wasted on you — you lot are so ignorant that you probably don't know what Keats are.") But when the salesman had finished, they agreed enthusiastically that wherever interest-rate swap options were, they must have some. So they emptied the municipal coffers, hocked the mace and the mayoral chain, sold the town hall, and came back with as many interest-rate swap options as the municipal dustcart could hold.

Shortly afterwards they discovered that they had lost the lot. It seems that certain interest rates had gone up — or, as it might be, down — whereas for the scheme to succeed they would have had to go down — or, in the alternative, up. No matter: since the councillors were using the citizens' money, of course for the citizens' benefit, it

could all be recouped if they sent out demands for thousands of pounds from each ratepayer. But before that admirable solution could be put into practice, they discovered, to their ill-concealed delight and relief, that the entire set of transactions was unlawful; the councillors were not empowered to raise the wind with swap options.

You can see what is coming, though of course the banks didn't. If the transactions were void *ab initio*, the councillors could not lawfully pile up the gigantic debts that the failure of the swap options had led to, and could therefore not stick the borough's inhabitants for them. So the banks, which had in effect underwritten the mad scheme, were — are — in the hole for anything up to £750 million; they had failed to discover whether the actions of Hammersmith and Fulham were within their municipal powers, and what would happen if they were not.

Within the last few weeks, our "Big Four" have all announced disappointing, even alarming, figures of profits and losses; hundreds of millions of pounds have been, in the quaint language of their world, "written off". As practitioners of sound husbandry, they have decided to retrench; many bank premises will be closed, many employees will lose their jobs. All this is clear, what is not clear is whether the banks are going to explain how they failed to take the simplest precautions in the matter of the swap options, and whether a substantial tranche of the boards of directors, rather than the employees, should lose their jobs.

I understand no more of swap options than did the hapless Hammersmith councillors. But that is why I do not dabble in them, and why the councillors also should not have dabbled. The banks are supposed to know all about such arcane mysteries, else what are the banks for? How did they come to sink such sums in a game of chance which looked improbably from every corner? I cannot answer those questions. Nor, I imagine, can the mattress manufacturers. But they do not need to; all they have to do is to build more factories immediately, and be ready for the rush.

Still digging for victory

The gathering clouds of war in the Gulf have disrupted one of the last great archaeological quests, the search for the biblical city of Ubar. Sir Ranulph Fiennes has had to postpone his plans to travel to Oman this month to begin a scientific search for the famous city, a centre of the incense trade which has been buried under sand for 2,000 years.

Sir Ranulph, better known for his attempts to reach the North Pole unaided on foot, has secured the co-operation of the Sultan of Oman and was to have used the Sultan's helicopters and Land Rovers to locate the city, which is mentioned in the Koran. But they have been diverted to the multinational force assembled in Saudi Arabia. "Because the area is very remote we are entirely reliant on help from the Sultanate administration. If their resources are engaged in other areas then we cannot try now," Sir Ranulph says.

He discovered what he believes to be traces of the city during a reconnaissance trip in July. He and Dr Juris Zarins, an Arabian expert from Southwest Missouri State University, used infra-red photographs from the American space shuttle to locate a possible entrance to the city 600 miles south-west of Muscat, the Omani capital.

Despite the likelihood of war, Sir Ranulph, who left the Royal Scots Greys in 1971 and is a friend of the Prince of Wales, is optimistic that he will be able to lead his

scientific sleuths into Oman's Empty Quarter next spring. "It will be entirely over by then," he says confidently. "It must be. One way or another they will have decided that sanctions won't work. Then they'll move in and through air power they will completely swamp the Iraqis. It'll all be over within 10 days."

United States troops in the Gulf made history this week by becoming the first people to vote in an American election by fax. They waived their rights to a secret ballot in order to exercise their rights in high-tech fashion.

Gavel trouble

Amnesty International is feeling less than charitable towards Christie's after the cancellation of a sale that was to have raised thousands of pounds for its work. Amnesty organisers had spent 12 months persuading artists such as Richard Long, John Bellamy and Nancy Spero to donate 64 works, and hoped they would raise £100,000 at auction. Christie's disagreed and valued them at only £56,000, not enough to make the December 17 sale worthwhile.

"A whole year's work has been wasted," says Rose Garrard, one of the artists organising the venture, which had the endorsement of Melvyn Bragg and John Cleese, among other celebrities. "We feel very hard done by because Amnesty International has put a lot of money into it and because there was no discussion."

Mark Wrey, Christie's manager in charge of charity sales, says he first saw the works for auction late in September. "They had am-



DIARY

bitions we felt weren't right. The trouble with charity sales is that it's always the same people who get asked to give and to buy every time. I feel very irritated by them being wound up like this, when we were only trying to help."

Nodding donkey

Margaret Thatcher, her early warning system primed to fend off leadership challenges, might think Sir Anthony Meyer the last Tory MP to rally to her cause. But Sir Anthony has robustly defended her record in a public debate at Aberystwyth. The former "stalling horse" had to argue for Thatcherism against Labour and Welsh nationalist MPs when his fellow Tory, Nicholas Bennett, dropped out at the last minute.

"Nicholas is a Thatcherite loyalist, and a very good one," says Meyer, who was desecrated by his local party for last year's action. "I based his speech on what I thought he would say about the prime minister."

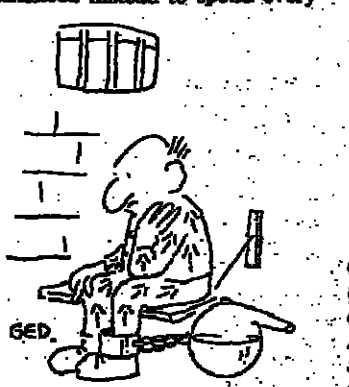
But having done the decent thing Meyer then calmly delivered

his own prepared speech, which totally contradicted his earlier message.

"I said it's a horrible government and does horrible things but it's extremely tough. However, I did urge the audience to vote for a Thatcherite government instead of Mrs Thatcher." Nevertheless, the speaker, overwhelmingly passed a no confidence motion in the government.

Criminal investigator

From California some heartening news for criminals with a talent for scientific research. Syed Salahuddin, a scientist convicted of misdirecting federal research funds, has been spared a jail term. He has been sentenced instead to spend every



Saturday for the next four years engaged in medical enquiry.

Salahuddin will be metaphorically chained to the laboratory bench while he clocks up 1,750 hours of research into the viral origins of chronic fatigue syndrome. A former member of the National Institutes of Health AIDS laboratory, Salahuddin is now a

visiting researcher at the University of Southern California. "I thought it would be a good idea to take advantage of his research abilities," says prosecutor Dale Kelberman.

White cliffs forever

Glamely ignoring gipsy that she will be heard quarling before any hostilities in the Gulf, Dame Vera Lynn last night said that she might consider singing for the troops in Saudi Arabia should she be asked. "I coped with those kind of conditions in Burma in the last war, although I was in my twenties then," she said at the launch of her latest book, *Under the Stars*.

So far the MoD has made no formal announcement about sending entertainers to divert the Desert Rats, but as the most famous booster of military morale, Dame Vera, now 73, might expect an approach. "The first thing I'd do is have a dozen different incense burners," she says. "I never have to practice my voice. I keep it in shape with lots of charity performances."

Although hardly rivaling the Queen or Mrs Thatcher for glamour, Bernie Grant MP cut a dash in Nigerian costume at yesterday's state opening of Parliament. Not one of nature's shrinking violets, Grant took the trouble to issue a fashion note in the form of a press release explaining that the trousers, undershirt, hat and robe were traditionally worn by chiefs of the Yoruba tribe. With engaging honesty, the information concluded: "Thanks are due to the Queen of Sheba, boutique of Batham, south London, for supplying this outfit."



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MISTRESS OF THE HOUSE

Margaret Thatcher's leadership of the Conservative party is in the gift not of the country but of Conservative members of parliament. With that leadership under notional if not actual challenge these MPs seemed to have decided that her performance in the House of Commons yesterday would be critical to their loyalty. If they needed proof of Mrs Thatcher's extraordinary stamina and determination, proof they received.

The prime minister is fortunate to have a temperament that rises to a great parliamentary challenge. The more pressure she is under, the better she performs. Responding in yesterday's debate on the Queen's Speech to a diatribe from Neil Kinnock may seem a somewhat arbitrary test of fitness to lead, but it was a test that had been set by her own side. This was one of the crucial performances of her career, certainly the most testing since Nigel Lawson's resignation. She was on form.

Whatever the shortcomings of Mrs Thatcher's personality — her tactlessness, her stridency and her tendency to antagonise those she should count as friends — her dominance over the Commons is impressive. Mr Kinnock had some good lines. For a moment, he looked as if he had drawn blood over her differences with her foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd. But Mr Kinnock's style lacks the vital ingredient of a good speech, incisiveness. His sharp rocks are still buried under a scree of verbiage. As in the Westland debate in 1986 he let her off more lightly than he should have done.

Mrs Thatcher resisted the pleas of those who have told her to soften her personal presentation. That is not in her character. If there is any softness about the late-Thatcher style, it derives from her recent discovery of the weapon of wit. Above all, she was combative. The facet of her personality that can be so unappealing when directed at foreigners is what has made her so formidable in the House of Commons. Under similar pressure, the former Harold Macmillan would have seemed

aloof and exhausted; Lord Wilson would have merely dined; Edward Heath would have floundered. Mrs Thatcher appeared to draw comfort and strength from the inept baying of the Opposition benches. Her repartee was even more fluent than the words of her script. This was good political leadership, a general out in front of the troops, single-handed.

If it was magnificent, was it war — war as modern electoral campaigns are fought? Mrs Thatcher's performance may persuade her backbenchers that any leadership contest would be futile and destructive. Seldom can any leader have looked less like ceding defeat gracefully. But for Mrs Thatcher to stave off a challenge merely by threatening to unleash the dogs of intra-party strife is hardly the best way to secure loyalty through to the next election. If that is not until 1992, there is one more opportunity to challenge her, next year, and there are plenty of potential rebels skulking in their tents, determined to fight another day.

The only way Mrs Thatcher can secure her position without question is by demonstrating that she knows how to win the country in 1992. That means more than a series of points victories in prize fights with Mr Kinnock at Westminster. In the world outside, she has actively to court popularity, to narrow the gap in the opinion polls with Labour, and to win back those at the Conservative grass roots who showed in Eastbourne that they are just not satisfied with her leadership.

Unlike her predecessors, Mrs Thatcher's stomach for a fight after many years in office has not shrunk. But she is far from out of trouble. Even in the television era, elections are not decided in the House of Commons. Mrs Thatcher's own speeches when she was leader of the Opposition were ineffectual, yet she won an election. Tonight's by-election results may once again unsettle Tory MPs. But their leader has shown how an effective performance in the House can rally a doubting party. It is an indispensable political skill.

DAMAGE LIMITED

President Bush can take some comfort from the American mid-term election results. The Democrats consolidated their hold on both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Democrats also defeated candidates for whom Mr Bush had personally campaigned in the gubernatorial races in two important states, Florida and his elected home base, Texas. But the "free fall" in support for his party which Republican campaign managers were predicting less than a month ago failed to materialise.

Pre-election opinion polls found two thirds of voters more pessimistic about the future than for a decade, with three-quarters of them identifying government and politicians as the problem rather than the solution. That should have hurt the Republicans, the party which traditionally claims to be more competent in handling the economy. Yet Mr Bush's party lost far fewer seats than in 1982, the last mid-term election to take place during an economic recession. Voters, it turns out, may be revolted by Congress; they still tend to return their own sitting congressman.

In the Senate, where 34 of the 100 seats were at stake, the Democrats added only one to their existing 55-member majority group. They made stronger gains in elections to the House, where all congressmen seek re-election every two years, gaining nine additional seats (including an unexpected win by a socialist in rock-ribbed Republican Vermont) to give them 267. In the traditionally volatile races for the state governorships, where 36 out of 50 were at stake, both sides took unexpected losses and the Republicans compensated for defeats in Florida and Texas by holding California, biggest of the sunbelt "superstates", against the charismatic Democrat, Dianne Feinstein, previously considered a possible candidate for the presidency.

The political significance of such small shifts in electoral fortune is larger in the US than in Europe. Shortly before the elections, the respected *Congressional Quarterly* estimated that of the 435 seats in the House, 215 Democrat and 138 Republican seats were "absolutely safe", leaving just over 80 to fight for. The "swing" in each race is therefore as significant as the result. There was some

evidence of the predicted "anti-incumbent" backlash. Both Democrats and Republican incumbents suffered from public pessimism about the economy and irritation with the autumn's prolonged wrestling over the federal budget. Mr Bush, however, already operated under the handicap of an exceptionally strong Democratic grip on both houses of the legislature. Even small losses will make governing by cross-party consensus, his preferred method, marginally more difficult.

Extrapolating trends from American elections, where local issues may influence choice as much as national ones, is dangerous. (One Democratic congressman, Jolene Unsoeld, was considered vulnerable because he wanted to protect the spotted owl in a district of Washington state heavily dependent on the lumber industry.) The results appear to leave Mr Bush as the leading contender for the 1992 presidential elections, although with warning flags placed along his route.

If the federal budget is not seen by then to be under firm control, the effect of the separation of powers between President and Congress on the governability of America could become a decisive issue. But some results, notably the tax revolt in New Jersey which nearly cost Senator Bill Bradley his seat, should prompt the Democrats to moderate their class-war rhetoric about soaking the rich. Across the country voters appeared less interested in the moral controversies of recent years, such as abortion law, than in cautious policies, at federal and state level, to improve the economy. Such attitudes could help Mr Bush.

To the outside world, the oddest aspect of the campaign was the small role played by the confrontation in the Gulf. The truism that American elections are won and lost on domestic issues was proof even to the deployment of 230,000 American troops in Saudi Arabia and the signs that fighting is inevitable. Mr Bush may not have succeeded in preparing Americans for battle, but nothing so far suggests the emergence of a "Vietnam factor" to cripple the White House. Mr Bush is free to turn his attention to the most pressing item on the international agenda: countering Iraqi aggression.

RED ROUTES FOR RED BUSES

In an otherwise lacklustre legislative programme, Cecil Parkinson's transport department will take the lion's share of the last full session before a general election. The most substantial of his projects is likely to be the road traffic bill, under which some 300 miles of "red routes" will be designated within the capital under a new London "traffic director", answerable only to Mr Parkinson.

The scheme envisages strictly enforced parking prohibitions along the thoroughfares chosen. Delivery vehicles would normally be expected to use side roads. Heavy penalties, perhaps including spot fines, swift clamping and the forcible removal of parked cars would keep all available traffic lanes in constant use.

There will be intense argument over which roads should be designated, since the village-like character of some London neighbourhoods could disappear. Apart from local objections to the red routes, some of which have already surfaced over the pilot route from Archway to Commercial Road, doubts remain about the proposed scheme. Common sense suggests that traffic often expands to fill the space provided. The choking of the M25 since its opening has fuelled such scepticism.

Mr Parkinson believes there is no causal connection between road improvements and the rise in car numbers, and that the diversion of commercial traffic on to ring roads like the M25 has reduced congestion in central London. Be that as it may, the burden on the roads will continue to grow. Commuters will start to drive as they find public transport ever less reliable, tourists will increasingly bring in or hire their own cars, and nearly half of Londoners have yet to acquire cars at all.

Second-car owners are tending to drive to schools or shops where previously they would have walked or taken a bus.

Even an ever-expanding red route network could not cope with patently unrestricted demand: cities such as Los Angeles and Houston, designed for the car age, have found congestion just as acute as London. The only sensible answer is to shift preferences radically towards public transport, by improving service quality while accepting the congestion of car routes. In a letter to *The Times* last July, the former chairman of London Transport, Sir Keith Bright, proposed that special red routes — for buses only during rush hours — should run along roads approximating to the Underground network. Other vehicles would be banned at such times; a simplified and cashless fare collection system would avoid long queues at bus stops.

Sir Keith's more drastic proposal deserves to be incorporated into Mr Parkinson's bill. Such bus-only routes, combining the existing bus lanes and the new concept of the red route, could handle a much greater proportion of commuter movement than at present. London's buses, hitherto the Cinderellas of metropolitan transport, could find their Prince Charming in the new traffic director — though it is a sad comment on this government's obsessive centralism that he should have to be responsible to Whitehall.

Mr Parkinson deserves only two cheers for his red routes. The third and most resounding cheer must wait until the red buses, which should have the first claim to run on these routes, are given their rightful priority.

Right and reason in a 'just war'

From the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster

Sir, Clifford Longley's article ("Going by the Aquinas book", November 3) has brought to the attention of your readers the principles which would determine whether or not military intervention in the Gulf could be morally justified. What, then, is the present position?

It is my conviction that a moral case can be made to justify a limited military action in the Gulf only if two fundamental conditions are satisfied. The first is that all other avenues to a possible solution have been tried and have failed, and therefore limited military action is truly the last resort. It would be wrong, for instance, to abort any constructive internationally supported initiative by embarking prematurely on a military strike.

Secondly, there must be a real prospect not only of achieving the just objectives sought by the use of limited military force, but also of not causing in the process physical and political damage out of all proportion to the original injustice.

Both these conditions are extremely difficult to assess but those in authority, who alone are in a position to make the decisive assessment, have a duty to be guided by them. A failure to observe that duty would certainly render a military intervention immoral.

Moreover, there is a further consideration of a different order. The success of the United Nations in the formulation and execution of the international response to Iraqi aggression is already a unique achievement. The end of the cold war has allowed an unprecedented degree of international co-operation and trust to develop.

This is potentially of immense significance but is as yet fragile. It will therefore be of great importance that the authority of the United Nations is seen to have endorsed any direct military intervention which may be undertaken.

Yours sincerely,
BASIL HUME,
Archbishop of Westminster, SW1.

From Mr Christopher Derrick

Sir, Clifford Longley outlines the Thomistic doctrine of "the just war". But he passes too hurriedly over the key question of "proportionality". Put simply, this means that your war has to be "the lesser evil". But less than what? And by what sort of reckoning?

CBI attack opposed

From Lord Hanson

Sir, As Hanson plc is a member of the CBI, I write to make it clear that the noted criticism by its Director, General of the government in his closing speech in Glasgow (report, November 7), does not reflect the views of a great many industrialists in this country. The role of the CBI is accurately to represent British business. This government has achieved immeasurable benefits for everyone in industry over the last ten years and now that the country is facing a downturn the last thing we need is statements which can be seen as

EC referendum

From Mr William Wilson

Sir, We must be the only country that was only asked to join the European Community after we had joined it. Ever since then the development of democratic accountability in the Community has lagged far behind moves towards greater integration. After all, who elected Jacques Delors, to whom is he really accountable, and what do we do about it if we do not like what he is saying? The European Parliament is not equipped to subject the Commission to proper accountability while the majority of voters cannot name their MEP.

The government is now under pressure to agree a date to achieve

Premature poppies?

From Mr W. A. P. Conran

Sir, Each year the wearing of remembrance poppies starts earlier, even cabinet ministers were seen thus adorned during a television interview today. What is the reason for the phenomenon? To wear a poppy on November 2 does not mean that one remembers better or more deeply than others who wait until, say, the 10th; if anything it waters it down to something superficial or even

Privatising ports

From the Chairman of Blyth Harbour Commission

Sir, From reading Jonathan Prynne and Ross Tiesman's article (Business News, November 1) your readers could be forgiven for thinking that trust ports could not obtain powers similar to Associated British Ports without seeking privatisation and that privatisation is therefore needed in order to compete.

Further, Patrick McLoughlin's statement, "Taxpayers must be repaid", gives the impression that most British ports have received vast sums from the UK Government, by way of grants and aid (in a similar way to continental ports). These impressions are grossly misleading.

In order to face the inter-port competition mentioned in the article, the port of Blyth promoted its own private bill and in 1986 obtained an ability to trade on similar lines to Associated British

When you start a war you know little or nothing of how it will end, or of how much death and destruction it will cause. And even if you did know, how could you possibly balance those evils against other evils which would be political and abstract and highly subjective? The trouble isn't only that such calculations could only be approximate: there's no rational basis upon which they could even be attempted.

Take the present case. We would all like to see the liberation of Kuwait and the downfall of Saddam Hussein. But would that cause be worth 50 million lives, or five million, or 5,000, or only 500? How do we begin to judge? And of course, we don't know what that operation would cost in fact. The lesser evil? The recognisably "just" war?

There is much talk of "Catholic tradition" and it isn't always so good. We Catholics have a long de facto tradition of paying absolute and serious attention to this range of questions. I take that to be the greatest scandal in the Church's history.

Yours sincerely,
CHRISTOPHER DERRICK,
6 St Michael's Road,
Wallingford, Surrey,
November 5.

From the Right Reverend Mark Green

Sir, The House of Bishops of the General Synod, meeting recently, found it impossible to agree on a statement which might have given guidance on the Christian attitude to possible war in the Gulf (report, October 22).

This is not surprising. The 50 or so members obviously have conflicting views about the morality of war in general, and a Gulf war in particular. Not surprising, but still regrettable. They could have agreed on a statement outlining two alternative Christian stances. Nothing would have been lost by such honesty, for in moral questions there is not always one blazingly right course of action and one which is plainly evil. Be that as it may, they could, unanimously, have urged the nation to use next Sunday as a day not only of grateful remembrance, but of fervent prayer for peace in the Gulf by diplomatic means. Such a message would give Remembrance Sunday a new and urgent relevance. Even now it is not too late.

Yours faithfully,
MARK GREEN,
13 Archery Court, Archery Road,
St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex,
November 5.

attacks from what might ordinarily be perceived to be industry's natural supporters.

I do not believe there is a senior member of the CBI who does not know in his heart that it is essential for a Conservative government to be returned the next time round and to continue its achievements in the future.

If Mr Banham persists with these statements it will have appeared that we have removed our support when it was most needed.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
HANSON,
1 Grosvenor Place, SW1,
November 7.

a single economic and monetary policy, a single foreign policy, a single central bank and a single currency in Europe. By any standards these would constitute major changes in the way this country is governed.

No party has an unambiguous policy on these issues, and to vote on them at a general election where there are other matters to be decided would only obscure any mandate for action. Surely a referendum is long overdue? Any reluctance to give the voters a chance to express a clear preference would undermine the authority of those on both sides of the argument.

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM WILSON,
7 Rutland House,
Marble Road, W8.

satirical. Perhaps the media could arrange a truce next year, under which poppies are not worn until two or three days before Remembrance Day, thus concentrating minds on more remembrance than on getting in first. Poppies might mean more then to most of us.

Yours faithfully,
W. A. P. CONRAN,
The Old Rectory, Risby,
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk,
November 2.

Ports. Rather than seek privatisation, we provided for an increase in our borrowing powers adequate to satisfy our future needs.

In this way we were able to concentrate on the main business of operating and developing a successful harbour with the first call on profits being for reinvestment rather than dividend. This is in line with our statutory obligations to improve, maintain and manage the port and provide the "competitive edge" necessary for expansion in a highly competitive industry.

When compared with our continental colleagues, and with the notable exceptions of the ports of London and Liverpool, UK ports have received little by way of financial aid from the UK Government. For example, in 120 years of existence, the port of

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

Community care of mentally ill

From the Chairman of the Society of Clinical Psychiatrists

Sir, You report (November 1) that according to the Commons social services committee there will not be enough money to provide alternative local services for the 12,500 patients now in psychiatric institutions who will be discharged in the next five years. What then there is no alternative?

The most dangerous and desperate sufferers from mental illness include acute paranoid schizophrenics and the clearly suicidal psychotic depressive. Not only the sufferer but relations and innocent strangers are being put at high risk; psychotic murderers are frequently those who refuse all effective medication.

A full-blown paranoid utterly believes in his normality and lack of illness. He is equally firm in belief that royalty, politicians, relations and haphazard strangers who accidentally cross his path are malign persecutors; and it is on such beliefs that he kills.

Modern medication is frequently effective. One can hardly have "community hit squads" to enforce medication in private homes. Not only will there be appalling individual instances of distress from forced entry, there will be an awful toll on relatives driven to try to summon up succour from sources not always keen to even "see" flagrant mental illness.

There will also be the long nights of recrimination for daring to try to summon up "community care". Furthermore the acutely psychotic require 24-hour consistent care till they have been stable for more than a few days.

Why does not each health area so busily destroying in-patient care facilities use a fraction of the money "saved" to fund a statistical officer for each district whose full task will be to check each suicide and murder with a mental

illness history, so that we all can know the full picture?

Yours faithfully,
HARRY JACOBS, Chairman,
Society of Clinical Psychiatrists,
The Coach House,
Rochford, Warrington,
Colchester, Essex.

From the President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists

Sir, A recent ITV *This Week* programme highlighted the plight of two mentally ill patients living in the community without adequate supervision or care. It concentrated on two extreme examples.

There is a danger that this type of programme can increase the stigmatisation already suffered by the mentally ill and the mentally handicapped, the vast majority of whom are dangerous neither to themselves nor to others.

Whilst this college welcomes the mental illness specific grant in principle as an example of ring-fencing, the total amount allocated by central government is much too small to meet real needs. Local authorities are also expected to fund services for the ever-increasing number of elderly people with dementia out of this budget — at a time when local authorities are having to cut back on services in general. The amount available in real terms for the treatment of mental illness has decreased in recent years, even though there is increased demand for services.

This college has repeatedly stated that care in the community is not a cheap option. The allocation of the general public and the continuing stigmatisation of the mentally ill have influenced successive governments, so that the care of the mentally ill still receives low priority.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW SIMS, President,
The Royal College of Psychiatrists,
17 Belgrave Square, SW1.

Blow to TV education

From Lady Plowden

Sir, I write dismayed that on October 30 the House of Lords finally rejected the amendment to the broadcasting bill that would require the Independent Television Commission to broadcast programmes with an educational purpose and social action programmes and that such programmes should be shown at appropriate times of the day and week (Parliament, October 31).

Up till now ITV has provided programmes of educational value, their character arising from the current legislation requiring it "to inform and educate as well as entertain". These programmes have in the past stimulated many thousands of people to want to know more about a given subject that they have seen discussed or

illustrated on ITV. To satisfy this demand those who made the programmes have up till now frequently provided a follow-up, sometimes with literature, sometimes in co-operation with a local education authority, this often organised by ITV education officers.

How ironic it is that at a time of great reform in education when Parliament and the public agree that education and training are matters of the highest priority to find the Government making it less likely that programmes with an educational or social purpose will be shown by the new independent companies.

Yours sincerely,
BRIDGET PLOWDEN
(Chairman, Independent Broadcasting Authority, 1975-80),
11 Abingdon Gardens,
Abingdon Villas, W8.

Soviet reforms

From Dr Martin Holmes

Sir, Your editorial, "Gorbachev and the West" (October 26), which mentioned the creation of a confederal Soviet Union more like the European Community than the United States, seemed to miss a number of ironies in current developments in both eastern and western Europe.

I visited the Soviet Union last month and it is clear to me that the demands for independence run way ahead of demands for limited autonomy among the republics. Pooling of sovereignty, as favoured by Euro-federalists in the EC, is seen as yet another device for maintaining discredited centralised Soviet control.

Moreover moves to a market economy, which you rightly com-

ment, must be accompanied by a currency reform which enables the republics to issue their own currency as legal tender. Only then will the liquidity overhang of near-worthless roubles, which threatens inflation, be removed. It is not surprising that M Delors should recently have advised the Baltic republics against the establishment of their own currencies given his antipathy to EC national currencies.

Such advice along with that which artificially preserves centralised Soviet control will do a great disservice to democratic and market-oriented reform.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN HOLMES (Member, Bridges Group Academic Advisory Council),
44 Park Town, Oxford,
October 26.

Monetary value

From Mr Geoffrey Norris

Sir, I recently invested in a stock of first-class Royal Mail stamps costing 22p each. The cost of sending an ordinary letter to EC countries is also 22p, but the Post Office tells me I must purchase 22p stamps instead.

A counter clerk explained that the first-class stamp did not show a value, adding: "They won't recognise it".

It does seem strange that, at a time when Britain has entered the ERM (exchange-rate mechanism) and when British industry everywhere is gearing itself up for 1992 the Post Office produces a stamp which may not travel outside the United Kingdom.

Yours hopefully (with a 22p stamp),
GEOFFREY NORRIS,
Glencot, Church Hill,
Horsell, Woking, Surrey.

Blyth has received some £200,000 (net of tax) in grants from the UK Government. Such a low level of grant can hardly justify a tax level of 50 per cent, in addition to capital gains tax.

This high level of tax could only be justified if the Government's aim is to pool resources to pay off the outstanding large debts — a principle which would certainly fail to obtain support within the ports industry or, one would imagine, with MPs representing the interests of their local constituents.

Several of my colleagues in the industry feel that the benefits of privatisation are being exaggerated by a major campaign by one port. Privatisation may be absolutely right for that port now, but not, I think, for the vast majority of other trust ports.

Yours faithfully,
J. W. STEVENSON, Chairman,
Blyth Harbour Commission,
79 Bridge Street,
Blyth, Northumberland.

Dance steps

From Mr Jeremy G. Hill

Sir, Whilst not being in a position to comment on the sashay in square dancing (Philip Howard, October 26), if it is the sashay in EC chess it must bear a closer resemblance to the slip step in Scottish country dancing than to the setting step, which is essentially danced on the spot.

The slip step is used in a movement closely resembling the chess in which a couple join both hands and "slip" down the middle. In the team in which I dance, however, this is known as "scooshing", an expression used by our former teacher. The origin of the word escapes me completely.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY G. HILL (Secretary, Demonstration team, Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (London branch)),
1 Montefiore Street,
Battersea, SW8.

Art in the bath

From Mrs Anne Chambers

Sir, Last Saturday I was bathing my visiting grandson amongst a flotilla of paper boats made from that day's *Times*. We were both so absorbed in our separate aims, I to launch and to sabotage, Tobias (aged two) to float and to sink them, that we failed to notice that both boy and bath had become marbled in a delicate tracery of black.

This form of marbling is very like the Japanese art of *umibori gashi*. However, since this new method involves only warm water, liquid baby soap, *Times* newspaper and a small boy, it is a very much simpler process, and equally pretty.

Yours faithfully,
ANNE CHAMBERS,
18 Beaumont Buildings, Oxford,
October 30.

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

November 7: The Queen, accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh, went in State to the Palace of Westminster today to open the Session of Parliament.

Her Majesty and His Royal Highness drove in a Carriage Procession, escorted by a Sovereign's Escort of the Household Cavalry, and were received by the Sovereign's Entrance by the Lord Great Chamberlain and the Earl Marshal.

Guards of Honour were provided at Buckingham Palace by the Queen's Guard mounted by 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards and at the Palace of Westminster by the 2nd Battalion, Scots Guards.

A staircase party of the Household Cavalry was on duty at Victoria Tower, House of Lords.

Gun Salutes were fired in Green Park by The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery and from the Tower of London by the Honourable Artillery Company.

The Imperial State Crown, the Sword of State and the Cap of Maintenance were carried previously to the House of Lords in a Carriage Procession, escorted by a Regalia Escort of the Household Cavalry.

Her Majesty's Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms was on duty in the Prince's Chamber and The Queen's Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard was on duty in the House of Lords.

The Ladies and Gentlemen of the Household in Waiting and the Pages of Honour to The Queen were in attendance at the Palace of Westminster.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh returned to Buckingham Palace and were received by the Lord Chamberlain and the Vice-Chamberlain of the Household.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh gave a Reception for members of the Ryder Cup Walker Cup and Curtis Cup Eisenhower Trophy teams at Buckingham Palace.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE November 7: The Princess Royal, President, Riding for the Disabled Association, today attended the National Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Riding for the Disabled Association, National Agricultural Centre, Kenilworth and was received by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Warwickshire (the Viscount Daventry).

Mrs Timothy Holderness-Roddam was in attendance at the Reception at Buckingham Palace for the International Yacht Racing Union.

The Hon Mrs Louloudis was in attendance.

CLARENCE HOUSE November 7: Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother this afternoon visited Queen Mary's Clothing Guild at St James's Palace.

Ruth, Lady Fermoy was in attendance.

KENSINGTON PALACE November 7: The Prince of Wales, Patron, North Pole 90, held a reception for the Multiple Sclerosis Society, at Kensington Palace, W8.

His Royal Highness attended the World Monuments Fund Hadrian Award Dinner at the Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, SW7.

Today's royal engagements

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh will give a reception for members of the Diplomatic Corps at 9.30 am.

The Duke of Edinburgh, honorary member, will visit the United Oxford and Cambridge University Club at 5.00.

Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother will attend a service of remembrance at St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey, at 11.25.

The Prince of Wales, as President of Business in the Community, will attend the launch of Business in the Environment at Grosvenor House at 12.15.

The Princess Royal, will open the new Bournemouth General Hospital at 11.00; will open the new ward at Victoria Hospital, Wimbome, at 1.15; as Patron of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, will open the bureau at Wimbome, Dorset, at 1.40; and the new bureau and the library complex at Weymouth at 2.35. As Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Signals, she will attend a service of remembrance at the Royal Signals at the HQ Mess, Blandford, at 7.25.

Princess Margaret, as Colonel-in-Chief of the 15th/19th The

Major General Sir Christopher Airy was in attendance. The Princess of Wales, President, Barnardo's, attended the Champion Children Lunch at the Savoy Hotel WC2.

Mr Patrick Jephson was in attendance.

KENSINGTON PALACE November 7: The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, member of the Court of Assistants of The Haberdashers' Company, was present this afternoon at a Service of Thanksgiving for the Tercentenary of the Robert Aske Foundation in St Paul's Cathedral.

The Countess Alexander of Tunis was in attendance.

KENSINGTON PALACE November 7: The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester today visited Northern Ireland and were received by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (the Rt Hon Peter Brooke, MP).

The Duke of Gloucester this morning visited Co Armagh and was received by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant (the Earl of Caledon).

His Royal Highness opened the refurbished office accommodation at Armagh Observatory and subsequently visited Armagh Planetarium and later opened the new buildings at the Royal School, Armagh.

The Duke of Gloucester was present at a luncheon given by the 11th Battalion Ulster Defence Regiment, Mahon Road, Portadown.

The Duchess of Gloucester this morning visited Belfast and was received by Colonel R.G. Madocks (Vice Lord Lieutenant of the City of Belfast).

Her Royal Highness visited the Menece Nursery at Segal House and subsequently visited Victoria College to open the new library.

The Duchess of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief, Royal Irish Rangers, was entertained to luncheon and opened the 5th (Volunteer) Battalion, Territorial Army Headquarters at Hydebank, Co Down.

In the afternoon, The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester opened the Lyndhurst Court Sheltered Housing Complex, Bangor, Co Down.

Finally, The Duke of Gloucester, President, National Association of Boys' Clubs, accompanied by The Duchess of Gloucester, were present at a reception given by the Northern Ireland Association of Boys' Clubs to mark the Association's Golden Jubilee at Hillsborough Castle, Co Down.

Their Royal Highnesses were received by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Co Down (Colonel William Brownlow).

Mrs Hon Mrs Page and Major Nicholas Barne were in attendance.

YORK HOUSE ST JAMES'S PALACE The Duke and Duchess of Kent this morning left Royal Air Force Northolt for a series of engagements in Turin in connection with the "Design Britannico: Tecnologia e innovazione" Exhibition.

Their Royal Highnesses were received on arrival at Northolt by Signor Livio Muz-Falconi, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of Italy.

Mrs Julian Tomkins and Commander Roger Walker RN are in attendance.

Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, as Patron of the Design Fellowship Trust, will open Netley Waterside House, Netley Abbey, Southampton, at noon; and will open the St John's Winchester charity's extra care unit at Devenish House at 2.40.

The Duke of Gloucester will present the 1990 Structural Steel Design awards at the Savoy Hotel at 12.20.

Prince Michael of Kent, as a Trustee of the National Motor Museum, will attend a meeting of the trustees at Grafton Street at 10.45.

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OBITUARIES

RODRIGO MOYNIHAN

Rodrigo Moynihan, portrait painter, died on November 6, aged 80. He was born on October 17, 1910.



Rodrigo Moynihan with a self portrait in his South Kensington studio, 1984

ALTHOUGH best known to the public for his portraits of Princess Elizabeth, commissioned by her mother in 1946, and, more recently, of Mrs Thatcher, commissioned in 1983 by the National Portrait Gallery, Rodrigo Moynihan was an artist of wide accomplishment and his work underwent several distinct changes in direction. Early in his career he evolved a form of abstract expressionism which, for a brief period, was the most advanced experimental painting of its kind. He returned to a much more naturalistic style, and was associated with the Euston Road School triumvirate of William Coldstream, Victor Pasmore, and Claude Rogers in 1937. After the war he continued in a broadly Euston Road style, but in the summer of 1956 he again moved away from naturalistic landscapes and group portraiture towards non-figurative art, only to startle his colleagues by developing from this into uncompromising "hard-edge" abstractions, a ten-year phase which lasted until the early 1970s. Much of his recent work is characterised by a low-toned naturalism that stems from the 19th century French tradition of tonal painting so brilliantly practised by Whistler and Sickert.

Of mixed Irish and Spanish descent, Rodrigo Moynihan was born at Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Canary Islands, the son of Herbert James Moynihan, a fruit-broker, and Maria de la Puerta. He came to London in 1918 where he was educated at University College School, and spent three years in the USA, at a high school in Madison, New Jersey, between 1924 and 1927. He returned to Europe in 1928. He studied art at the American School and at the Pova studio in Rome, before entering the Slade School in 1931, winning the Slade Scholarship in his second year. He began exhibiting with the London Group in 1932, becoming a member in 1933. A year later he emerged as one of the leaders of the Objective Abstraction Group, whose exhibition at the Zwemmer Gallery caused a minor sensation. Moynihan's work was among the most uncompromising non-figurative paintings in the show, with the emphasis put on the texture and physical properties of the paint, which was applied in thickly impasted layers and blobs. This was a logical development, in fact, from late Monet whose work he much admired. Critical opinion, with one

honourable exception, was quite unprepared for such radical work. In 1931 he had married a fellow Slade student, Elinor Bellingham Smith, a surgeon's daughter. His wife was to become a well-known painter in her own right. She died in November 1988.

Moynihan and Coldstream both admired the two important Matissees then in the Gargoylle Club, Soho, including *The Red Studio* (1911) (now Museum of Modern Art, New York). Through his friendship with Coldstream, Rogers and Pasmore, Moynihan became involved with the Euston Road School from 1937 to 1939 where he sometimes taught in the evening. He sustained himself mainly by teaching in those pre-war years, and at Euston Road taught a method of drawing by volumes, but was never considered a complete insider within the School, since he refused to accept the then fashionable realist-abstract dialectic.

Called up in October 1940, the year in which he had his first one-man show at the Redfern Gallery, Moynihan trained as an artilleryman. Later transferred to the

camouflage section, he was invalided out after two years' service, and in 1943 was commissioned as an official war artist. Apart from *Medical Inspection* (1943) which is in the Imperial War Museum, almost all his work until 1945 was portraits, and seven of these, of high-ranking army officers and scientific advisers, are in the Imperial War Museum. They were often painted at speed, and demonstrate his ability to capture a likeness while preserving a firm control of his medium. *Private Clarke* (1943), in the Tate Gallery, has a sensuous quality which fits the subject perfectly, just as the cool, carefully composed *Rt Hon Clement Attlee* MP (1947), in the Oxford and Cambridge University Club, captures the quiet authoritative of the post-war Labour prime minister.

Elected ARA in 1944, he became professor of painting at the Royal College of Art four years later, and taught there until 1957, exerting great influence on a generation of younger painters more by example than by trying to impose his own style. He was encouraged by Robin

Darwin to recruit his staff from practising painters, not career teachers, and his inaugural lecture, *The Attributes of Painting* (published in 1949), in which he took as his theme a still-life by Chardin, had some unexpected results. Some of his students began to examine closely their own domestic surroundings, and this emphasis on raw realism led to the formation of the so-called Kitchen Sink School. His eleven-foot long canvas of *The Teaching Staff of the Painting School, Royal College of Art* (1949-50), in the Tate Gallery, was a tour de force that few, if any, painters of his day could hope to emulate. It was painted for the Arts Council's "Sixty Paintings for '51" exhibition. Solidly composed and of sombre tonality, it was succinctly described by Lawrence Gowing as "a picture not only of individuals, but of relationships and stances that link people together and keep them separate..." This group was followed by *After the Conference: The Editors of Penguin Books* (1951), a less obviously successful composition, perhaps,

but still impressive both as a work of art and as a record of the British Enlightenment of the period. In 1953 he was appointed CBE, in 1954 he became a full academician, only to resign in 1957 when his own work changed and he felt out of sympathy with the Royal Academy. He did not rejoin until 1979. In 1957 he moved to France, to Sanary on the Côte d'Azur, and later to Paris. His palette lightened, and he began to develop the abstract expressionism heralded in his work of the early 1930s. Now, the palette was richer and the surface textures more deftly achieved.

In 1960, Moynihan married his second wife, the painter, Anne Dunn, and they settled in Provence. Between 1968 and 1971, he also had a studio in New York, and this restlessness may be in part a legacy of his own cosmopolitan upbringing. Certainly, he cannot easily be labelled, and by 1964 his style again changed, when he now produced pictures which were no longer anonymous in the precise sense of the word, but related to landscape. A work such as *Yellow Lake* (1970-71), with its strong horizontal bands of purple, reds, and greenish-black above a lake of yellow, all crisply defined, both suggests a particular location and is yet independent of place. Soon afterwards, he began a series of still-lives in which the reference to actual objects is plainly legible, but their abstract shapes are emphasised and reinforced by broad areas of subtly modulated colour, as in colour field painting.

Moynihan, with his wife Anne, John Ashbery, and Sonia Orwell, edited *Art and Literature*, which was published in Paris from 1963 to 1968. He also wrote perceptive articles about Rubens, Goya, Constable, and Thomas Eakins, which indicate his range of artistic sympathies. While he will probably be best remembered as a portraitist, his attitude to this art form was far from staid. He described it as "social, not introspective." You must establish a relationship. Men want to look like types - generals all want to look like generals. But women all want to look the same... Oh, and academics - so timid, so much grey, unremarkable faces. Many of his best portraits are of his fellow painters, Francis Bacon, Coldstream, Gowing, Pasmore and Victor Waddington, as well as a number of self-portraits. He was a warm, gregarious man, of medium height and stocky build. The Royal Academy gave a dinner in his honour on his 80th birthday last month.

He had a son by each of his two marriages.

RAYMOND OLIVER

Raymond Oliver, the restaurateur and television cook, died on November 5 in Paris at the age of 81. He was born at Langon in the Gironde region of south west France on March 27, 1909.

RAYMOND Oliver referred to his ovens at the legendary Grand Vefour restaurant in Paris as "my piano". He played many culinary masterpieces in the 35 years that he ran the restaurant, considered by many as the finest in France. It regularly received the three-star accolade of the Michelin guide in the days when this elite group comprised but a dozen restaurants for the whole of the country. Half were in Paris, like the Grand Vefour, the Tour d'Argent, Lasserre and the old Maxim's, but the great chefs

for the most part were from the provinces. No one took Paris as much by storm as Oliver who graduated to three-star status within five years of taking over the rundown restaurant in 1948.

The writer Colette, who lived in the same building just off the Place Palais Royal, was a regular in the beautifully ornate dining room. Another diner was Jean Cocteau, who wrote that the chef had created "the cuisine of angels". André Malraux could be seen brooding over the fate of mankind before Oliver slipped him his special eggs appetizer, deceptively named "Oeufs au plat Oliver", but which contained foie gras topped by truffe sauce. When this was followed by Sole Grand Vefour, poached in

white wine and stuffed with mushroom purée, then heavenly lamb and a chocolate soufflé, the author of *La Condition Humaine* looked as happy as Alexandre Dumas who had sat at the same table in the reign of one of Oliver's predecessors in this historic and romantic corner of Paris formed by the arcades of the Place Palais Royal.

Oliver was born into a family of chefs. His maternal grandmother ran La Malle-Poete restaurant at Langon where he was born. His father, also a chef, sent him at the age of 15 to Paris where he was an apprentice in a leading restaurant. He returned to the south west to work with his father in a restaurant famous for its wedding banquets and other local feasts. There he acquired his preference for small game birds, wood pigeons, truffles, foie gras and Sauternes wine, all of which came to form the foundation of his cuisine.

Few could afford to eat at the Grand Vefour in the bleak post-war era (or later, for that matter) and it was television that made Oliver a household name. His Friday evening programme, *Art et Magie en Cuisine*, presented with the blonde announcer Catherine Langeais, was watched by millions between 1953 and 1968. It was a "first" in France and the volatile chef with his strong regional accent, twinkling eyes and pepper and salt beard became famous. He appeared without fee at the beginning; financial rewards came later with 26 cookbooks and gramophone records of recipes that sold by hundreds

of thousands. He was invited to lecture and make television appearances in America, Australia and Japan and was the forerunner of today's globetrotting French star chefs, increasingly absent from their restaurants.

Oliver always declared himself to be the enemy of nouvelle cuisine, but his fellow chefs regarded him as one of its unconscious founders because of his broad imagination and enthusiasm for updating and lightening traditional French dishes and reducing the time involved in preparation. His library of 3,000 cook books, including an original of Taillevent's *Vandier* of 1488, provided the main inspiration for his cooking, but his peers said his cuisine was evolutionary and therefore "nouvelle". Oliver

himself wrote: "Cooking is similar to Ingres's remark about painting when he stressed the importance of drawing. Good cooking requires a solid foundation. Its ingredients also are like words, which are common property but with the cook as the poet."

He retired in 1975 after leaving extremists bombed the Grand Vefour on the grounds that it was a symbol of capitalist consumption. The restaurant was restored, but Oliver had lost his enthusiasm and sold it back to the Taittinger champagne family. The Oliver tradition, however, lives on as Raymond's son, Michel, is a well-known television chef who owns a chain of medium-priced restaurants including the one where his father was an apprentice. His grandson, Bruno, is also at "the piano".

Appointments

Mr Roy Goddard to be a member of the shadow Independent Television Commission. He will also be a member of the Independent Broadcasting Authority until it is wound up.

Mr Ian Branton to be chairman of The Tree Council for two years from January 3, 1991.

Legal Mr M.T.F. Briggs, Mr G. Newey, and Mr P.J. Ghoshani to be junior counsel to the Crown, Chancery.

Senior Treasury appointments, to take effect on 3 December: Mr A.C.S. Allan will succeed Mrs J.B. Banquing as Head of General Expenditure Policy Group, following her appointment as Deputy Chief Economic Adviser. Mr P.J. Sedgewick will succeed Mr Allan as Head of

International Finance Group. Mr C.J. Mowl, on promotion to Grade 2, will succeed Mr Sedgewick as Head of Forecast and Analysis Group. Miss M.E. Peirson will transfer on loan to the Department of Social Security. Mr C.W. Kelly will succeed Miss Peirson as Head of Social Services and Territorial Group. Mrs A.F. Case will succeed Mr Kelly as Head of pay and Industrial Relations Group. Mr M. Williams, on loan from the Department of Social Security, will succeed Mrs Case as Head of Home, Transport and Education Group. Mr J.B. Banquing will succeed Mr R.G. Allen as Head of European Community Group. Mr R.L.G. Allen will succeed Mr Banquing as Head of Local Government Group.

Scottish Episcopal Church Appointments The Rev Michael Lawman, NSM St Luke's, Glasgow will be transferred to St Andrew's, Dundee. The Rev John G. Wood, Vicar, St John's, Dundee, will be transferred to St Andrew's, Dundee.

The Rev Kevin Price, Vicar, St James, Edinburgh, will be transferred to St Andrew's, Dundee. The Rev John G. Wood, Vicar, St John's, Dundee, will be transferred to St Andrew's, Dundee.

The Rev Professor William H.C. Frend, Priest in charge, will be transferred to St Andrew's, Dundee. The Rev John G. Wood, Vicar, St John's, Dundee, will be transferred to St Andrew's, Dundee.

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Forthcoming marriages

Signor A. Balzani and Miss S.J. Crickbank. The engagement is announced between Andrea, elder son of Signor and Signora Lorenzo Balzani, of Milan, and Sally, younger daughter of Professor E.K. Crickbank OBE and Mrs P.R.M. Harvey.

Mr P.N.O. Betts and Miss S.A. Gossage. The engagement is announced between Philip, son of Professor A.O. Betts, of Stowe, and Mrs J. Betts, of Ilford, Oxford, and Sarah, youngest daughter of the late Commander A.W. Gossage, RN, and of Mrs A.R. Gossage, of Swanton, Hampshire.

Mr J.P. Bibart and Miss N. Widdowson. The engagement is announced between Jean-Pierre Bibart, of Versailles, and Nicky, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs John Widdowson, of Cheltenham.

Mr D.F. Gibbs and Miss A.C. Fisher. The engagement is announced between Dominic, son of Mr and Mrs John Gibbs, of Windhoek, Namibia, and Annabel, daughter of Mr and Mrs Iain D. Fisher, of St Andrews, Fife.

Mr T.T.M.F. Noble and Miss H.C. Judge. The engagement is announced between Timothy, son of Mr and Mrs B.P. Noble, of Oxfordshire, and Helen, elder daughter of Sir Igor and Lady Judge, of Crick, Northamptonshire.

Flight Lieutenant C.J.R. Norton and Miss C.A. Bell. The engagement is announced between Christopher, elder son of Mr and Mrs Richard Norton, of Wimbledon, and Charlotte, fourth daughter of Mr and Mrs Jack Bell, of Sevenoaks, Kent.

Piers and Cynthia Plowden. A service of thanksgiving for the lives of Piers and Cynthia Plowden will be held at Plowden Church, near Lydbury North, Shropshire, at noon on Monday, November 19, 1990. Telephone: 0583 8246.

Service dinner

Indian Civil Service (Retired) Association. The annual dinner of the Indian Civil Service (Retired) Association was held on November 6, at the United Oxford and Cambridge University Club. Sir Ian Scott presided and the guest of honour was Mr John Hanson, Deputy Director-General of the British Council.

The Queen's Royal Irish Hussars. The annual dinner of the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars was held last night at the Cavalry and Guards Club. General Sir Brian Kenney, Colonel of the Regiment, presided.

HMS Osprey. Admiral Sir Julian Oswald, First Sea Lord, was the principal guest and speaker at a dinner held last night in HMS Osprey to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Taranto (November 11). Commander J.G. Hurstall, president, and Rear Admiral Michael Layard, Flag Officer Naval Aviation, were among those present.

Association of Corporate Treasurers. Mr Karl Otto Pohl, President of the Deutsche Bundesbank, was the guest of honour at the annual dinner of the Association of Corporate Treasurers held last night at The Brewery, Chiswell Street. Mr Richard Desmond, president, was the host.

Reception. Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Sir Peter Horden, MP, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the UK Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and Mr George Foulkes, MP, vice-chairman, were hosts at a reception held yesterday in the Houses of Parliament for high commissioners, other representatives of Commonwealth countries in London and visiting Commonwealth members attending the State Opening of Parliament.

Birthdays today

The Marquess of Abergavenny, 76; Lord Allanbridge, 65; Professor Christian Barnard, heart transplant pioneer, 68; Mr Alain Delon, actor, 55; Mr Ken Dodd, comedian and singer, 59; Mr Edward Goldenhilt, sculptor, 62; Mr Frederick Gore, painter, 77; Mr D.A. Head, former chairman, Rolls-Royce and Associates, 65; Dr G.R. Higginson, vice-chancellor, Southampton University, 61; Lord Justice Leggatt, 60; Sir Richard Luyt, former vice-chancellor, University of Cape Town, 75.

Professor Robert McWhirter, radiologist, 86; Sir Denis Mahon, an historian, 80; Viscount Mountbatten, 54; Mr Martin Peters, footballer, 47; Sir James Redmond, former director of engineering, BBC, 72; Mr William Reid, former director, National Army Museum, 66; Professor Sir Robert Shields, surgeon, 60; Mr Tamás Vassary, pianist and conductor, 57; Mr Folke Walwyn, racehorse trainer, 80.

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On the trail of a hairy man story

When we set out to make a film about the Chinese Wildman - said to be a 6ft, two-legged red-haired creature - it was with equal amounts of scepticism and fascination.

So frequent are reports of such a creature that there is a national institution, called the Wildman Society, based in Wan Xian, a small town halfway down the Yangtze River in southern China, devoted to collating an impressive, if odd, array of information on the thousands of reported sightings.

The collection includes pickled hands and feet, said to be from a Wildman but which transpired to be from an unknown monkey, huge clumps of bright red, so-called Wildman hairs and the skeletal remains of a small child, with a skull that looked half-human, half-ape.

Professor Liu Minzhong, who runs the society, claimed it was the result of a human and Wildman mating and although none of us could explain the reason for the deformation, we were suspicious, especially when we were refused permission to film it.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the Wildman is its popularity in China as a living legend. More remarkably, eminent Chinese scientists have, over the years, seriously investigated claims of its existence and continue to do so.

They have even built up convincing arguments for the origins of the creature, claiming that it is a descendant of the *Gigantopithecus*, the greatest ape known to have roamed central southern China half million years ago.

The Chinese Academy of Science has a long history of work in the

China has its own version of the Yeti.

Geraldine Easter

reports on her search for the creature for a television film



Model of Gigantopithecus, said to be the ancestor of Wildman

field. In 1977, the academy organised an expedition of more than 110 scientists, who spent a year combing the fields of remotest Shennongjia, in response to a reported sighting of a Wildman. Today, scientists from Huadong and Fudan universities in Shanghai are analysing supposed Wildman hairs, with controversial results. At Huadong, using a scanning electron microscope to look inside the hair and a transmitting electron microscope to analyse the external structure, they examined four different samples of hair, comparing

them with human and animal hair. One was a monkey's and the other two were completely different to human and animal hairs, with an internal structure similar to that of modern man, but an external structure similar to that of an animal.

But it was the results from the respected Fudan university, where scientists used a sophisticated analytical technique called PDKE (proton-induced x-ray emission), to analyse several elements contained within the hair simultaneously, that called for further investigation. The scientists analysed two samples of hair supposedly from a Wildman. These were compared with eight human hairs and hairs from all the commonly found animals in China.

Scientists at Fudan say six of the "Wildman" hairs were from other animals and one was human. The other six were significantly different to human and animal hair, having an iron-to-zinc ratio 54 times higher than human hair and eight times higher than general primates. The scientists concluded not only that this was the first scientific evidence for the existence of an unknown creature, but that the creature was an unknown higher primate.

Is this the first real evidence for the existence of the Wildman in China? During our research for the film, we collected three supposed Wildman hairs and asked Professor Xianzhou Zeng at Fudan university for an analysis. Two, he said, had the same high iron-to-zinc ratio as the so-called Wildman hairs.

We then gave them to Dr Ranjeet Sokhi, of the School of Physics and Space Research at the University of Birmingham, who Dr found a significant difference in the iron-to-zinc



Wanted poster: artist's impression of a Wildman put on show in rural China by film-makers asking if anyone had seen the creature

ratio - about 30 times. Dr Sokhi comments: "All we can conclude is that these hairs, which are claimed by some to be from the Wildman, show entirely different elemental characteristics from normal human hair, which is extremely difficult to explain."

Brian McCarthy, from the British Textile Technology Group, which has a history of working on the Turin shroud, has also looked at the hairs under a scanning electron

microscope. The results show the hairs to be either human or from a higher primate, leaving unanswered the question of whether the Wildman exists.

Our next step should be conclusive. A DNA analysis to be carried out by Ohio state university in America will consider whether the hair is from any known creature.

© The author is the producer of On the Trail of the Chinese Wildman, on Channel 4 this Saturday at 8pm.

Tensions fuel pay rises in the Gulf

Untaxed salaries of up to £35,000 with a 15 per cent premium are being offered to British information technology staff who are prepared to work in Saudi Arabia and reduce the growing shortage of staff caused by the Gulf dispute.

Companies are increasingly recruiting from within Britain as many expatriates, particularly Americans, leave the Middle East because of the military and political tensions. "We are finding Saudi Arabian companies are having to increase salaries by at least 15 per cent above what they would normally offer because of the current situation," says Roger Allington, the managing director of Dalroth and Partners, a London-based recruitment agency.

Saudi Aramco, one of the world's largest oil and gas-producing companies, based in Dhahran, on the Gulf, is seeking materials and engineering analysts with experience of IBM mainframes and programming languages such as Cobol, PL1 and Fortran. It is offering the salary premium as well as emphasising the traditional facilities such as golf, sailing and other activities to try to attract IT staff to the region for indefinite-term contracts. Although the pay rates for a typical two-year contract have recently been rising, they are still not as high as in the early Eighties.

Salaries are not as astronomical as they were ten years ago, when IT staff working in the Middle East could comfortably double their British pay," says Graham Francis, the group sales director of the Myriad recruitment consultancy, which is seeking a dozen staff for a management consultancy in Jeddah and Riyadh.

Part of the job of foreign staff at the beginning of the Eighties was to train the locals. Now that many are trained, salaries are only about 50 to 70 per cent higher than those paid in Britain.

United Computer Services, based in Saudi Arabia, is recruiting more than 12 categories of IT staff through Dalroth for a local company. It wants a large number of British staff, trained in

JOBS SCENE

Intergraph, Wang VS, Amdahl and IBM, to join International Airports Projects' research and development operation in Jeddah on the Red Sea for two-year renewable contracts.

Most of the positions, ranging from technical editors to senior managers and consultants, covering the entire family. Other benefits include free accommodation, medical coverage, flights to and from the region, 28 days' leave, holiday flights and allowances to meet local transport and school costs.

A bonus is paid on completion of the contract, which can be renewed if desired. Salaries vary, but are comparable with UK salaries before tax.

"Despite the current situation, the Middle East is no longer the gold mine it used to be," says Peter Lloyd, Dalroth & Partners' management consultant. "The companies are well aware of salaries paid abroad and they are offering comparable rates to those paid to permanent IT staff in London, but with the advantage that it is tax-free and, with free or subsidised accommodation, the cost of living is lower and expatriates can save substantial amounts while there to bring back home."

"Some Saudi Arabian companies are offering the bonuses of 15 per cent as a form of inducement and I suspect more companies will do it if they find they cannot fill their vacancies."

A campaign by Dalroth recently attracted more than 150 responses, despite the Gulf dispute. This indicates that many British staff find the attraction of relocating to the Middle East too good to forgo, given the jobs downturn in the UK market for IT staff.

"Certain types of staff will go to Saudi Arabia irrespective of the situation, such as those newly divorced, those who are attracted to such areas and those who see a career advantage in the Middle East as it is so advanced in IT terms," Mr Allington says.

LESLIE FILLEY

Dinosaur destroyer could strike again

THE apparently sudden extinction of the dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous period 65 million years ago has been linked with a meteorite impact. New research suggests the meteorite was a fragment of a giant comet that ran amok through the solar system, scattering the planets with dust and debris.

The meteorite theory was proposed after unusually large concentrations of the metal iridium were found across the world in sediments from the end of the Cretaceous period. Iridium, which is chemically related to platinum, is

extremely rare in the Earth's crust, but is more common in meteorites. So the iridium was interpreted as the global fallout from a meteorite impact.

Meteorites contain other strange things besides iridium. Last year Dr Meixun Zhao and Dr Jeffrey Bada, of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, California, announced the discovery of peculiar organic chemicals in iridium-rich sediment in Denmark. These chemicals were

amino acids, related to those that make up proteins in living organisms. The resemblance to living things stops there. The buried amino acids were of varieties commonly found in certain types of meteorite, but are not known to occur in living things.

The new research by Dr Kevin Zahnle and Dr David Grinspoon, of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Ames research centre in California,

published in today's *Nature* magazine, suggests that the iridium and amino acids came to rest in Denmark in different circumstances, although both came ultimately from the same source, a giant comet entering the inner solar system towards the end of the Cretaceous period.

Dr Zahnle and Dr Grinspoon think that a Cretaceous comet, if big enough, could have showered the Earth with enough debris to be detectable

65 million years later. This would explain the rain of amino acids, preserved both above and below the iridium layer.

There is, of course, no guarantee that a giant comet could not strike again. A mysterious asteroid called Chiron, discovered in 1977 orbiting beyond Saturn, has now been found to have a small comet-like tail.

A new analysis of Chiron's orbit by researchers at the

University of Manchester, also published in today's *Nature*, shows it to be highly unstable. Chiron, far from being a quiet asteroid, was very probably a giant comet until a few thousand years ago, and may well resume life as a fully fledged comet in the relatively near future.

At 125 miles in diameter it contains enough mass to make 10,000 comets the size of Halley's Comet. The effects that even one of these bodies would have if it struck the Earth would be enormous.

HENRY GEE
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Mr C J Kerr, Department of Civil Engineering, Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, Imperial College Rd, London SW7 2BU (Tel: 071-859 5111 Ext: 4869)

from whom further particulars may be obtained.

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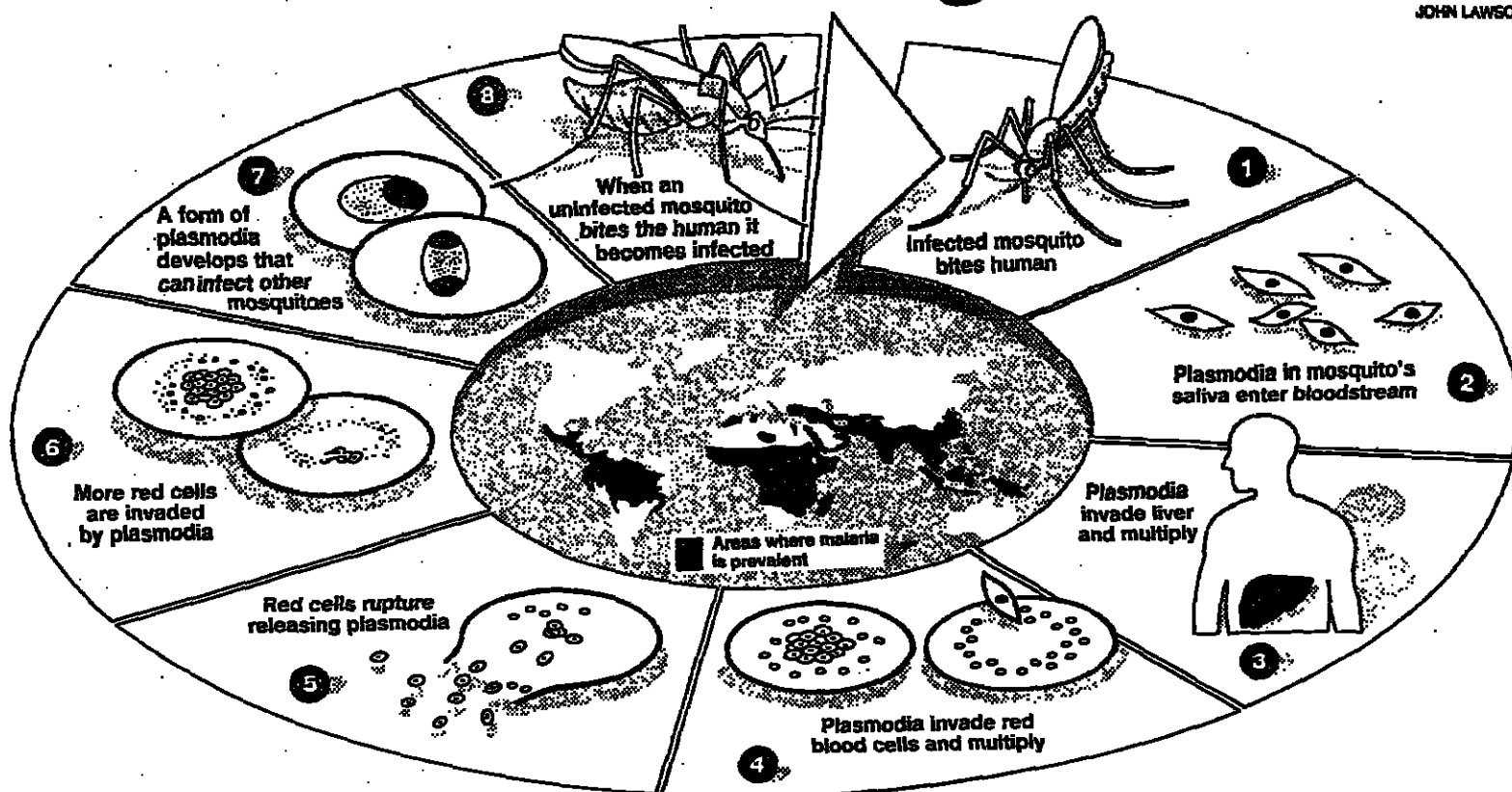
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War on the winged killers

JOHN LAWSON



The circle starts after dusk when the female mosquito, hungry for blood, comes to feed. The anticoagulant she injects contains parasites that will flourish when she has gone. The mosquito that arrives to bite the same victim becomes infected with the parasites and takes them on to her next target.

The sequence, repeated endlessly, is one of the most vicious circles in nature. The result is malaria, and the failure to break that circle is among the biggest frustrations of modern medicine. The disease has plagued mankind throughout history and kills between one and two million people a year, most of them infants in Africa. Another 270 million are infected. About 90 million new cases occur annually in more than 100 countries.

The classic symptoms include uncontrollable shivering, high fever and a severe headache. Malaria can strike the vital organs, and if it affects the brain it causes coma and convulsions. Casualties among British travellers to malarial areas are comparatively few: half a dozen or so deaths, and 2,000 sufferers a year. But among visitors to some parts of west Africa, the numbers have risen eightfold in the past few years. There is a simple and sinister explanation. The bugs are beating the drugs.

A new drug to prevent or protect against malaria may take 15 years to develop at a cost of about £75 million. But, as the evidence of the past few decades shows, the parasites, called

As attempts to defeat malaria seem to be failing, Thomson Prentice finds researchers who are mounting new studies to beat the deadly menace

plasmodia, need less time to rebuild their defences and develop resistance. The latest and one of the most powerful of these drugs is mefloquine, introduced two years ago. Already, resistance to it is being documented by doctors. Resistance to chloroquine, the standard treatment, is almost as widespread as the disease.

Thirty-five years ago, the World Health Organisation proclaimed its intention of eradicating malaria from the globe, rashly predicting that this could be achieved within five years. Despite huge efforts and temporary gains, the programme ended in humiliating defeat in the late Sixties. Inappropriate use of DDT and other insecticides and the overuse of drugs in the long run provided the parasites with stronger armour.

The war is all but lost, and Ralph Henderson, an assistant director of the WHO, candidly admits as much. "Until a universal tool such as a vaccine becomes available," he says, "we may have to put aside thoughts of controlling, let alone eradicating, malarial infection. We may have to step backwards for a while to see whether we can at least drastically reduce the number of deaths, mostly child deaths, from the disease."

Other options will have to be

considered, Dr Henderson says, "even if it means turning to less sophisticated solutions, such as insecticide-impregnated beds or curtains, repellents or other means of avoiding mosquitoes at peak biting times."

There are grounds for optimism, however. Researchers at the Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London are starting to understand how plasmodia parasites acquire drug resistance. Dr Ron Behrens, a consultant physician at the hospital and a leading authority on the disease, says: "The parasites have been extremely clever in adapting themselves to survive everything we have been able to throw at them in the past 40 years."

In the only project of its kind, Dr Behrens and his colleagues are analysing patients' blood samples and "culturing" the parasites in the laboratory to measure their ability to survive a range of drug strengths. In this way, they hope to find ways to break the vicious circle of infection. Samples of parasites from the world's malarial areas are being collected at the hospital to map the geographical patterns of resistance.

"Among other things, we want to learn why the disease occurs in British travellers," Dr Behrens says. "The

actions of the drug may be changing, the parasites may be changing, or the ways in which individuals take their anti-malarial tablets over a period of weeks during and after their trips may be an important factor."

The research is being supported by British Airways, which has a travel clinic at the hospital. The airline's interest is simple. "We want to fly more passengers to tropical areas, but we want them and our crews to have the best protection against illness," says Dr James Dunlop, the airline's head of international health services.

Airline crews are at risk even during the briefest night-time stopovers. An article in last month's *Aviation, Space and Environmental Medicine* records that a flight attendant on a Swiss charter airline died of malaria after being bitten by a mosquito during a refuelling stop in Dakar, Senegal. Infected mosquitoes have been known to hitch a trip back to an aircraft's home base and cause malaria in unlucky individuals at or near airports. At least one such case has occurred at Heathrow, and others have been reported in Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris and Zurich.

Because the incubation period between infection and symptoms can be several weeks, travellers need to begin taking anti-malarial tablets a week or two before their journey, throughout the visit, and for at least four weeks afterwards. The drugs are far from perfect but with a successful vaccine at least ten years away, they are the best protection available.

Should we cold-shoulder the bitter winter theory?

This year will test new methods of weather forecasting

THE COMING winter will provide the acid test for one of the most intriguing examples of apparently periodic behaviour in the weather. If the weather is exceptionally cold in the eastern half of the United States, it will rescue what is perhaps the only example of a long-term weather cycle that is useful for forecasting.

The cycle in question is not simple. It involves the conjunction of three roughly periodic phenomena. These are the 11-year cycle in solar activity (sunspots), an approximately biennial fluctuation in the upper atmosphere winds in the tropics, and a less regular variation in sea surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific.

Attempts to link weather fluctuations with sunspots have been a popular meteorological pursuit since 1843, when Heinrich Schwabe discovered that the number of sunspots occurred in a marked 11-year cycle.

In spite of the publication of more than 1,000 scientific papers, the statistical judgment in the late Seventies was that there was little or no convincing evidence of significant or practically useful correlations between sunspot cycles and the weather.

But this was called into question in the Eighties by the discovery of a highly significant statistical link between solar activity and the clearest example of multi-annual periodic behaviour in the weather.

This year will test new methods of weather forecasting

This cycle is the quasi-biennial oscillation (QBO) in the prevailing winds of the equatorial stratosphere. Although it has been known since the Fifties that these winds reverse direction every 13 months, it was not until the Eighties that scientists noted differing behaviour patterns in certain features of the atmosphere during the two phases of the oscillation.

In particular, this behaviour appeared to show the opposite response to solar activity. As a result, analysis of all the data showed no significant effect as the two responses cancelled each other out. However, when the data were separated into two groups, depending on whether stratospheric winds were easterly or westerly, an 11-year cycle appeared.

It was of particular interest that during winter over the northern hemisphere, both in the stratosphere and at lower levels, distinct patterns were observed. These suggested that at times of high solar activity, when the upper atmosphere winds were westerly, the eastern half of the US would have severe winters.

Furthermore, the storm track over the North Atlantic tends to be further south than normal and the chances of a

cold winter in northwestern Europe are increased.

The statistics were so impressive that in 1988 there was a high expectation in the US that the coming winter would be severe, as the stratospheric winds turned westerly and solar activity rose to an unexpectedly high level. However, February 1989 was mild. What went wrong?

The answer may lie in the tropical Pacific. Roughly every three to five years the sea surface temperature rises. When this phenomenon, known as an El Niño, arises, it appears that a cold winter over North America is likely.

In 1988, for the first time since before 1950, the conjunction of high solar activity and westerly stratospheric winds occurred when the tropical Pacific was abnormally cold. Could this have cancelled out the conditions for a bitter winter?

On statistical grounds, this year will provide a clear test. The Pacific temperatures are rising and so are unlikely to be an important factor. If the winter is cold, then the connections will be worthy of further consideration. If not, then another apparently convincing connection between solar activity and the weather will bite the dust.

If, as many meteorologists expect, the winter does turn out to be exceptionally cold, then the real challenge is to provide a physical explanation for the connection.

BILL BURROUGHS

Dead ducks may be saved

A LONG controversy over the cost of Salter's Duck, an offshore wave power scheme invented by a British engineer, could be resolved by the European Community. The EC's science directorate has proposed a £100 million programme to assess renewable energy, and for the first time it will explore wave and tidal power schemes.

One of the most bitter disputes of Britain's alternative energy programme was the decision eight years ago to end research into Salter's Duck, an invention using dozens of metal duck-shaped units bobbing on waves to generate clean electricity. The duck, invented by Professor

Stephen Salter, of Edinburgh University, has become a favourite with supporters of renewable energy, particularly wave power.

They claim that experts with the Atomic Energy Authority deliberately put the system's costs too high, fearing it might compete too strongly with nuclear power.

A review of wave power costs and potential reliability has been ordered by the energy department but the EC programme, which is expected to involve assessment by independent technical experts appointed by the commission, might satisfy all parties.

Under the programme, now awaiting approval by the

Council of Ministers, wave projects such as Salter's Duck will be allowed to apply for research funds. Professor Salter's only worry is whether enough independent expertise can be gathered by the EC in an extremely new field without allegations of vested interest.

There have been allegations that Britain has been opposed to EC funding for offshore wave projects. Nevertheless, one senior official says the decision to propose an alternative energy programme which includes wave and tidal studies was taken following consultation with experts from member states.

NICK NUTTALL

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HEALTH

MEDICAL BRIEFING Dr Thomas Stuttford

Filling a gap in the market

The prime minister's evenly matched teeth are widely assumed to owe more to the skill of a dentist chosen by Saatchi & Saatchi than to Roberts' genes or expert childhood care in Grantham.

Not only must a speech be rehearsed endlessly, but the mouth which makes it has to be able to withstand a prying television lens which will relay the sight of any damage to millions of households. Teeth implants are the latest of the many weapons available to those who are to keep a youthful oral appearance, and to avoid having a set of false teeth bubbling in a glass beside a Downing Street or White House bed.

Next time the remodelled politician fields questions on the National Health Service, confident that his peroration will not be spoiled by a nasty incident with his false teeth, he should be thankful that he was able to afford the cost. Titanium implants are not available on the NHS and cost a private patient approximately £1,000 per tooth.

Dental implants were first used by the ancient Egyptians, but were very unreliable, even in the Fifties, when there was a 50 per cent failure rate. A dental implant is a metal device which is firmly implanted into the jawbone to provide an artificial root to which a replacement tooth or teeth can later be



Under the lens: Mrs Thatcher's teeth are the subject of speculation

attached by means of a connecting peg.

Until recently, epithelial scar tissue tended to grow around any implant and loosen it, but now that the implants are made of titanium, which is compatible with bone, they no longer stimulate the formation of scar tissue. Modern titanium implants become totally integrated into the jawbone, a process technically known as osseointegration and are permanently fixed. New style implants have a 95 per cent success rate. Up to eight implants can be inserted into each jaw, the number depending on the size of the gap which has to be filled and the strength of the available bone. The implants are left buried under the gum, and temporary false teeth, for six months, after which x-rays are taken to

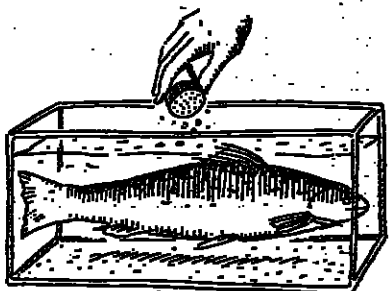
ensure that osseointegration is complete. Once integration has occurred matched teeth, or a bridge of teeth, can be fixed with a connecting peg to the implant and, given normal good fortune and a decent toothbrush, will last a lifetime. Implants are not recommended for diabetics, who are prone to infection, or for haemophiliacs or other people with clotting defects.

Implants are invaluable for fixing false teeth that have become loose and unstable as the underlying jaw shrinks over the years. Two implants, judiciously placed, can act as stabilisers for a wandering plate, with the result that many elderly people who had loose teeth can return to eating apples or even corn on the cob.

Salmon still safely in the pink

One of the joys of the past decade has been that salmon can be eaten without guilt; it is now relatively cheaper than hither to, and as it is so rich in vitamins and the fish oils which may protect against coronary heart disease, eczema and even arthritis, its consumption can be excused on medical grounds. Recent press reports have seemed to erode this excuse, and have suggested that salmon might contain unacceptably high levels of dichlorvos, a pesticide used to control sea lice in fish farms.

Analysis of the fish has also revealed traces of the antibiotic, oxytetracycline, and research workers have hinted that the superb pink colour may be due more to carotaxanthin, a dye added to the fish food, rather than to any natural plankton it might have fed off while swimming in some northern sea. The



suppliers of salmon have reacted angrily, and point out that, although fish food contains supplements of carotaxanthin, it is the same naturally occurring substance which gives wild salmon and trout their pink colour. Oxytetracycline, when prescribed, is used in doses of up to two grams a day, while a person lucky enough to have a pound of salmon would only receive 0.2mg daily, not a dangerous dose. The suppliers also say that the residual levels of the pesticide are way below those permitted in either meat or cereals.

On the available evidence, it would seem that the over-stressed executive would be well advised to remember the good that salmon might do his coronary arteries, and forget that he has ever heard of dichlorvos, oxytetracycline, or carotaxanthin.

Steroids: a question of strength

At first sight there seems little obvious connection between the over-muscled bodies of Randy Barnes, "Butch" Reynolds and Ben Johnson, the three banned Olympic athletes who have risked health, sex life and longevity to achieve passing glory on the games field, and the eczematous child scratching him or herself raw while the rest of the world sleeps. But last week a spokeswoman for the National Eczema Society said that every time there is a scandal involving the illicit use of anabolic steroids by athletes



another batch of parents confused by the use of the term "steroid" abandons a topical steroid cream or ointment, which is chemically quite different and which plays such an important part in the treatment of their child's eczema. The spokeswoman added that under-treatment with topical steroids, a mistake that can lead to a permanently damaged skin, is a more widespread problem than the occasional cases of side-effects associated with the use of a steroid cream which is inappropriately potent, or applied for too long to the wrong area.

Selecting the correct strength of steroid cream is important to the treatment of any patient, and the correct strength is the one which will bring the inflammation under control quickly.

Medication is only part of the treatment of eczema. The use of emollients (oils) in the bath to prevent dry skin, and a change of lifestyle so as to avoid factors which can trigger an attack of eczema, are every bit as important as the chemist's cream. It is little use covering a patient with steroid preparations, pouring oils into their baths, or prescribing antihistamines to alleviate the scratching, if the family cat is allowed to nestle down on the child's ciderdown at night.

Television's blood test

Eagle-eyed viewers might care to play "spot the doctor's hands" in tomorrow night's episode of *Casualty* on BBC1. The aim is to guess the point at which, by clever editing, the hands wielding the scalpel or suturing the wound belong not to the actor, but to Dr David Williams, renal registrar at St Peter's Hospital in London and medical adviser to the series.

The use of such experts as Dr Williams, plus some startlingly realistic special effects, has made *Casualty* probably the most authentic-looking hospital drama to date. But although it may seem a far cry from *Emergency - Ward 10* in 1957, where suffering was discreetly screened, the difference is mainly of degree: *Casualty*, like all its predecessors, depends on an apparently insatiable appetite among British television audiences for all things medical.

Next Wednesday Granada launches its latest contribution to the genre with *Medics*, a six-part series based on the lives of four final-year students and two young doctors.

Dr Williams, who also acted as a consultant to *Medics*, says: "The common thread with all these programmes is that people are fascinated by their own bodies and those of others. We are all so inquisitive about what goes on behind closed curtains, and how other people cope with misfortune and tragedy."

What is or is not shown on *Casualty* is largely a matter of judgment. Dr Williams says he would "show it all. But I do talk to friends who are not doctors, and they think it gets a bit much sometimes."

Can watching hospital dramas damage your health? As *Medics* takes on *Casualty*, Liz Gill feels the programme-makers' pulse

Peter Norris, the producer of *Casualty*, balked at showing a spleen being removed, and also at allowing an actor to give blood: "They said it would save make-up a fortune but you have to draw the line somewhere."

David Filkin, the editor of *QED*, the BBC's science documentary series, says: "There's always an element of anxiety about how much of an operation an audience can watch, but on the whole viewers are much more accepting than you would imagine."

Fiction tends to be more popular - *Casualty* regularly draws 12 million viewers - but some non-fiction can come close: *Jimmy's*, for instance, or *Hospital Watch*. Mr Filkin's own *Bodymatters*, a half-hour show in which telegenic doctors used giant models to show how the body works, had audiences of eight or nine million.

Over the past 20 years, he says, the medical profession has become increasingly co-operative and audiences increasingly sophisticated. He believes that one of the reasons cancer can be discussed openly these days is because television has pushed back the boundaries.

"It would be foolish to say that nobody's hypochondria has ever been fed, or anxieties heightened, but we have to live in the real world, and it's better to know than to fantasise," he says. "There's no evidence to suggest that anyone has been put off seeking treat-

ment, whereas understanding and awareness can give someone the confidence to seek it."

The next big challenge, Mr Filkin believes, is mental illness. "There is still a lot of prejudice, and we still have some distance to go before we can make it like cancer, something that just happens and is not a disgrace."

Joan Shenton, the director of Meditel Productions, which makes investigative documentaries on health subjects for ITV and Channel 4, believes television can provide an antidote to what she calls "consensus medicine". Her company made the controversial programme which questioned the link between the HIV virus and AIDS; another examined current thinking on dietary fats. "We are aiming to reach the consumer of health services and products. We try to take a critical look, challenge some of the assumptions and perhaps explode some of the myths."

A recent programme called *Impotence*. In *10 Men* prompted, she says, "an amazing response. We had to keep the phone lines going for four days instead of four hours. It was a real taboo breaker."

The extent to which television influences human behaviour remains largely a matter of debate. Occasionally it seems possible to measure cause and effect. When a character in *EastEnders* found she had a breast lump a couple of

years ago, two doctors wrote to the *British Medical Journal* to say that the number of patients at their breast clinic in the weeks immediately following the episode had almost doubled.

On another occasion there were suggestions that Angie Watts' overdose in the same soap opera had led to copycat attempts at suicide. A subsequent study by Dr Stephen Platt, a medical sociologist with the Medical Research Council in Glasgow, found the link not proven: "The evidence of a fictional programme leading to imitation is extremely thin. There has only been one study suggesting it does, although it is admittedly a very powerful one."

This research stemmed from a German television drama in which a young man killed himself on a railway line. The six episodes looked at the story from a different perspective, with the suicide incident repeated at the beginning of each one. "Not only did the suicide rate go up significantly," Dr Platt says, "but the increase was confined to young men using that method. When the programme was repeated a couple of years later, the same thing happened."

Lobbyists are generally keen to get their cause on television - Mr Norris is regularly approached by campaigners "for every condition known to man". He is not averse to including an unusual illness - the story about the patient with brittle bones in this week's episode of *Casualty* is the result of a mother's letter - providing they are suitable for an accident and emergency drama. Seeing their problem aired on television may, he thinks, bring some solace to sufferers and promote greater understanding and tolerance: the tenor of the programme is usually sympathetic.

Although *Medics* has been shot in a real hospital, its advance publicity says it is going to avoid the "stark realities" and concentrate instead on the "loves,

Age of medical innocence: *Emergency - Ward 10* (1957-67) was high on glamour, low on blood

fears, ideals and desires" of its main characters.

Doctors tend to get an image boost out of television. One American study found that for every bad doctor in peak-time TV drama there were 19 goodies. The ratios might not be so high on British television, but the glamour persists.

Gub Neal, the producer of *Medics* (who comes from a medical family himself), says: "If you humanise doctors, what I hope

you are doing is increasing admiration for them rather than decreasing it."

Dr Pat Troop, the director of public health for Cambridge Health Authority, welcomes more realistic portrayals. "Some programmes still put doctors on a pedestal, but a lot tend to be less idealised. If you can give people confidence that doctors are human and can be talked to, that is no bad thing." But one-sided programmes about particular ap-

proaches or treatments tend to annoy her: "Sometimes the evidence for success is not as sound as it might be, or is no better than the alternatives, but it gets patients worrying that something exists and they are not getting it."

Do doctors themselves watch medical dramas or documentaries? Dr Troop thinks not - "they watch escapist television to get away from all that."

Medics begins on ITV next Wednesday at 9pm.

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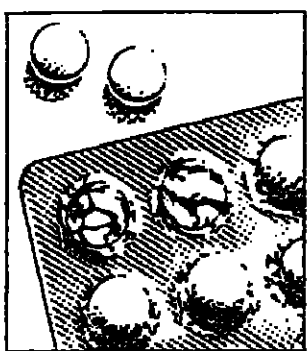
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FICTION

Checkmate for sad private eye

Josef Skvorecky, the Czech writer who now lives in Toronto, is a virtuoso of the conflict between ideals, or illusions, and things as they turn out to be. Irony flavours his work, no doubt because exile involves being unable to communicate straightforwardly. Skvorecky's international reputation rests upon two major novels, *The Bass Saxophone* and *The Engineer of Human Souls*, but he is less well known for a marvellous sequence of detective novels featuring Boruvka, his melancholy private eye.

Hugh Barnes

THE RETURN OF LIEUTENANT BORUVKA
By Josef Skvorecky
Translated by Paul Wilson
Faber, £12.99

The Return of Lieutenant Boruvka catches up with the diffident sleuth not long after he has escaped from Prague and arrived in Toronto, where his daughter works for a feminist detective agency, the Watchful Sisters. Here Boruvka manages to find employment as a parking lot attendant. His mournful demeanour, however, alarms the native Canadians, who have trouble believing a genius is in their midst.

It takes Boruvka no time at all to settle down to life as an outsider, and to a career observing the ways in which people try to make themselves comfortable away from home. Toronto appears to be crawling with Czech refugees. It's a pretty cliché affair: there are divisions and subdivisions. The anti-communists, for instance, who emigrated after the 1948 coup suspect the ex-communists, or non-communists, who stayed behind until the Soviet invasion 20 years later, of being crypto-communists, on the grounds that nobody could survive that long without yielding to the communist regime.

Both factions gather at the old English pub to gossip over the

latest edition of a Czech-language newspaper devoted to spreading rumours about former apparatchiks. When all-Canadian Heather Dondy is found dead — "with a .45 slug in her heart" — at the home of Jirina McCavish, editor of this scandal sheet, Boruvka gets on the case.

Skvorecky has written a mischievous parody of the detective mystery genre. Trying to back up a theory that implicates the Czech government, not to mention several hired killers and a tangled network of spies, the lieutenant runs into some awful baddies, such as Bignose, alias Werner von Vogelanz. He confronts the mafia. At last, "that's what everyone calls it," explains Boruvka's daughter, "though the official name for it is the Communist Party."

Boruvka himself is a treat. He is not the hard-boiled detective, knocking back gallons of rye, out of Raymond Chandler. If he ever has to walk down the mean streets, he does so with eyes full of sadness — "a European kind of sadness", the narrator observes. Solving the murder only drives Boruvka deeper into despair. It seems to confirm his worst suspicions of human nature.

Boruvka says he left Prague because he was a private detective in a country awash with secret policemen no longer made sense. In some respects *The Return of Lieutenant Boruvka*, written in 1981, no longer makes sense. The plot relies upon the polarity between western individualism and Soviet-style collectivism, and last year's upheaval in Central Europe has more or less disposed of that tension. But who really cares if Skvorecky's novel is out of date? It's wonderful anyway.

Finest female fictions

Nicola Murphy

REVENGE
Edited by Kate Saunders
Virago, £12.99
THE PARCHEMENT MOON
Selected by Susan Hill
Michael Joseph, £14.99

ANTHOLOGIES of short stories tend to cater to our seemingly insatiable interest in reading about minorities, in reading about people who aren't like us, about disabled Asian homosexual vegan satanist OAPs in the 16th century. *Revenge* and *Parchment Moon*, however, focus on the most paradoxically classified, as well as the most written for, minority group — women. Neither book (the prejudice and cliché ridden prospective buyer may be assured) is a vehicle for diatribes on the advantages of castration, the joys of menstruation, the political relevance of Doc Martens and enormous dungarees; these are not tirades written by fat, ugly, hairy lesbians who wouldn't get a man or into a sequined boob-tube if they tried till doomsday. Neither, more importantly, is either work a nice-nicey collection of charming little stories by charming little women — feminine women, men's women, REAL women.

At first glance, though, *Parchment Moon* appears to fall into this category. Susan Hill's introduction states that in choosing 25 stories written in this country, during this century, mostly since the war, she opted for "quiet, small-scale, intimate stories". Nice stories by nice ladies? Not at all, but the description, particularly "quiet", is misleading. In view of other editorial muddles, it is a mistake to take Hill's choice of words at face value.

The introduction incorrectly refers to Rose Tremain instead of Rose Macaulay, and the jacket blurb bizarrely states that Fay Weldon and Penelope Lively "explore female relationships with parents, brothers and sisters or old friends", when they don't (the former wickedly dissects the wife's "weekend" with her husband and children; the latter assumes the male's persona of a young German academic overwhelmed by new friends). Almost without exception the stories in this collection are powerful and enthralling. Inspired tales of love, lust, loneliness, rage and waste, of change, oppression, nostalgia, endurance, and death stand as testimony to the talents of the

writers and the trials of living — and not only living as a woman. Margaret Drabble writes as a newly-wed, wholly disillusioned husband; Elizabeth Bowen as a boy whose mother is dying; and A.S. Byatt as a male lodger haunted by the ghost of his landlady's dead child.

Apart from moments of black comedy by Muriel Spark and Clare Boylan, there is not a lot of laughter in *Parchment Moon*. Sheila Mackay and Patricia Ferguson focus on workplace exploitation; Angela Huth on comfort eating; Jane Gardam on the death of an adulterer. Only Sylvia Townsend Warner's incestuous siblings have a happy, loving relationship. Sara Maitland's trapeze artist twins tragically discover separate identities, and only Elizabeth Jane Howard's grand-daughter, amongst three generations of women, believes that life gets better as you get older. These stories are not nice, and the authors are not nice little ladies who lunch. The latter are anathema to Kate Saunders, who scores writing that is a "testimony to woman's own lovely nature".

Revenge's introduction is punchy and political, with talk of injustice and inequality, of revenge as a woman's art, of male physical violence as "bog standard retaliation". But this introduction also creates a distorted picture. *Revenge* does not throb and



Clare Boylan, black comic

resonate with the shrill screams of man newly-made eunuch.

In fact in many of these almost uniformly imaginative, challenging, and diverse tales from Britain and America, it is male characters who practise this woman's art. Winifred Holtby's prize baby grows up and murders his model mother, while Elizabeth Bowen's model husband "makes arrangements" for the beautiful dress that encapsulates the personality of his dazzling, absconding wife. Father and son destroy one another and their lives in Elizabeth Gaskell's "Doom of the Griffiths", while snobbish admen concoct a malicious revenge on their social climbing colleague in "Being A People Person", by Candia McWilliam.

Naturally Saunders does not entirely omit tales of spurned women. Ann Enright and Ruth Rendell dream up grotesque and desperate vengeance for their deserted women, whilst the heroines of both Emma Tennant's and Lucy Ellmann's inspired sick jokes, "Rigor Bench" and "Pass The Parcel", are perhaps sadder and certainly madder still. Indeed only Ellen Gilchrist's story of a little sister's revenge on her bullying brothers has a happy, and non-destructive, ending. In this collection, only in this story is revenge truly sweet.



J. G. Ballardry of the free-fall metaphysics and gruesome wit of outer space and inner time zones

Infinite space — with bad dreams

The creation of a united Europe, so long desired and so bitterly contested, had certain unexpected consequences. J.G. Ballard's story "The Largest Theme Park in the World" will reassure our prime minister about sovereignty; after some bizarre international coalescing, everyone rushes home to "reinsure a forgotten Europe of nations", each bristling to guard its own frontiers, tariff barriers, and insularity. Actually this is not a real story at all, it's a scenario, with no individual characters — as if Ballard were observing the behaviour of populations from a space capsule. As indeed he is.

The 14 stories in this book were mostly written in the past few years, with a few dating from the 1970s. Short stories are short cuts into a writer's mind; they are repositories of condensed obsession in a way that novels, even brilliant Ballard's own, are not. Like one of his characters, Ballard (in print) has "hot blood and cold heart". The only act of love in the book, between a woman scientist and a castaway on a Caribbean island polluted by chemical waste, is "over so quickly that he was scarcely sure it had ever occurred". In these stories, most of them set in the future, human relationships tend to be as de-ranged and sterile as the flora and fauna of the poisoned island. In "Love in a Colder Climate", post-Aids, everyone has long ago given up sex. The young are conscripted for two years' national service, copulating with strangers several times a week to raise the birth-rate; there is a lot of draft-dodging.

Most fiction writers, even sci-fi, gratefully on the redemptive power of love. Not Ballard. He seduces our timid minds with visions of space-time, light, and

Victoria Glendinning on short spells and divagations from our witty wizard of the fifth dimensions

solitary flight. "Flight and time, they're bound together. The birds have always known that. To get out of time we first need to fly." In the poisoned air of Cape Kennedy, NASA survivors have a space-sickness that wrecks their personal clocks: "time has run out", a single frozen moment stretches into

WAR FEVER
By J. G. Ballard
Collins, £12.95

weeks, and a crazed astronaut aspires to fly without wings. Ballard has studied medicine, and was in the RAF; his narrators are doctors, astronauts, aviators. All mystical and religious beliefs and techniques, he indicates here, are attempts to devise a world outside space and time, which is what astronauts experience directly — and in life, as in Ballard's stories, some end up terminally infected with visions, as do his hijackers, political assassins, and madmen. The lurching moon-walk is the limp of Robert Graves's club-footed Messiah. The birds which flap and wheel through these stories migrate, and so do his characters — sometimes as astronauts, into outer space, sometimes as lonely, desperate men, into inner space, inside their own heads.

It comes to much the same thing. A space-crew fetch up on a deserted space-station, and discover that the passages, stairs, and empty concourses continue in all directions — for fifteen billion light years. The whole cosmos is subsumed into a "vast transport facility". In another story a man with problems resolves never again to leave his suburban house. He eats what happens to be in the cupboards, and then... but this story must be read. He makes an internal migration through space-time no less absolute than that of the astronauts.

Ballard makes links quite naturally between altered physiological and psychological states, physics, technology, mysticism, and dream. These stories, though often bleakly political (about Beirut 30 years on; a senile Reagan's third term; World War 3, etc.), repeatedly evoke the experience of moving in overlit, static, ecstatic space, free of time, perspective, and dimension, yet familiar, as though pre-birth or post-death. And then, he is so funny. There is a gruesome wit in every one of these stories, some of it oblique: "Answers to a Questionnaire" leaves the reader to deduce the questions. The final story (written back in 1977) is, appositely, called "Index". That's just what it is — the index to the lost autobiography of one Henry Rhodes Hamilton, who knew everyone from Harold Acton, Hitler, and Helena Rubenstein, to Daryl F. Zanuck. It's such a detailed index ("Jesus Christ, H. R. H., compared to by Malraux, 476") that you hardly need the book. (Follow biographers, maybe this is the answer.) "Index" isn't exactly writing; it is ingenuity in print; but there is plenty of good, vital, luminous writing elsewhere in this fine collection of divagations.

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Hot scene in small town

John Nicholson

THE BURNING BOY
By Maurice Gee
Faber, £13.99
SURROGATE CITY
By Hugo Hamilton
Faber, £12.99
PECKHAM'S MARBLES



By Peter De Vries
Robert Hale, £13.95

Fifteen-year-old Duncan Round is *The Burning Boy*. Or rather he was, two years ago, when his chum Wayne Birles ignored the law of physics that describes the effect of bringing together a naked flame and kerosene. Wayne lost his life. Duncan most of his skin. Now history threatens to repeat itself, as the Saxton forest fire sweeps down Coppermine Valley at the speed of a cantering stallion. Duncan is by the family pool, discussing plastic surgery with Wayne's sister, Hayley. Another coincidence, huh?

A thoughtful lad, Duncan has a swift debate with himself. Disfigurement isn't much fun, especially when your dad makes it clear you disgust him. Unfortunately for Duncan, Tom Round is into physical perfection. It's what's made him an architectural luminary — and Saxton's leading lecher. But Hayley has just been kind to Duncan, and she certainly isn't ready to die. So he brainstorms — then hurls a couple of sets of scuba diving equipment into the pool, and anchors himself and his new friend to the bottom, until the inferno moves on. It's a powerful image, and a fitting end to one of the most engaging novels to come my way this year.

New Zealander Maurice Gee is an established writer of adult and children's fiction, best known for the award-winning *Plum* trilogy. *The Burning Boy* is Gee at his best, manipulating a large cast in a small town drama. Leading lady is Norma Sangster, principal of Saxton College for Girls, and a beacon of sanity and civilised values. Obligated to reproach the likes of Hayley Birles for their faddish leather wrist straps (like chewing gum, against the rules), she is much happier operating as a supernumerary social worker.

Duncan Round is a protégé. So is his mother Josie, who is at last preparing to break away from the intolerable Tom. To keep the pot bubbling, Tom lets it be known that he would be happy to abandon his preference for bimbos to accommodate Norma's occasional need for a man, if it suits her. It does not.

The real glory of Gee lies in his characterisation. He's extravagant with his gift, creating here some two dozen fully rounded personas. As a result, every sub-plot grips — and there are plenty of them. This is a splendid book, beautifully thought out, and delivered with a delicate balance between traditional narrative form and a more trickily allusive contemporary style.

Hugo Hamilton is another allusive writer — elusive, too, and distinctly evocative. *Surrogate City* is his first novel. Set in Berlin in the 1970s, it tells the story of a young Irish woman's search for the man whose child she is carrying. Helen's account of the Bonnie and Clyde existence she and Dieter enjoyed back in Ireland is greatly to the taste of Alan, a compatriot jack of most trades, currently servicing one of Berlin's brightest rock stars, Wolf Ebers. Alan becomes Helen's lover.

His role in Wolf's life is more ambiguous. Over-qualified to be a roadie, he handles most matters technical, and acts as ambassador between the singer and Hadja, who doubles as girlfriend and manager. Their frequently reversing Svengali/Tribby relationship provides the book's pivot. It would also be a recipe for commercial disaster were Hadja not omniscient.

She is one of those devastating people who are convinced they can make happen whatever they want to. So when a young Iranian woman acquaintance holes up with a fundamentalist, Hadja calls in the police, on the grounds that he must be holding her against her will. Hearing the woman declare her intention to marry the man, Hadja is momentarily deflated, but soon comes up with a rationalisation. Less easy to explain away is Wolf's affair with a young student admirer. Instead she takes a lover of her own, rightly calculating the effect of such an action on Wolf's gargantuan ego. Mr Hamilton is a fastidious writer with a fascination for life's minutiae. *Surrogate City* reverberates with echoes of Isherwood, not just because of the shared setting, but because of Alan's detachment from the drama he describes. It's a clever book, and a promising debut.

Peter De Vries is a writer at the other end of his career, who has dropped a pot-boiler every year for a quarter of a century. Plotting has never been his strong suit, nor is he overly concerned with the plausibility of his characters. Stereotypes are perfectly adequate to deliver the one-liners that are the real *raison d'être* of a De Vries novel. In *Peckham's Marbles*, Earl Peckham is an unsuccessful author and a bit of a card who woos and eventually wins Margaret Dumont lookalike and residence proprietor, Nell Delbelly. They both find sex quite funny.

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CINEMA: NEW RELEASES

Lifting the lid on the next world

David Robinson reviews *Flatliners*, *My Blue Heaven*, *The Mad Monkey* and Bresson's 1956 classic, *A Man Escaped*

Hollywood — after *Ghost*, *Ghost Dad* and *Heart Condition* — is still deep in speculation about the afterlife. This week's contribution is *Flatliners* (15, Odeon West End), written by Peter Filardi and directed by Joel Schumacher. As evidence of its sophisticated ambitions, the press material on the film includes a bibliography of paperbacks about life after death.

The story concerns a somewhat unbalanced medical student (Kiefer Sutherland) who incites a group of his peers (including the attractive Julia Roberts and Kevin Bacon) to experiment in temporary death: stopping their hearts so that they register a flat line (whence the title) on ECG monitors.

They experience visions of the life beyond, but death turns out to be a can of worms. Resentful beings from the other world begin to return their visits.

The idea promises more than the film delivers. The trips are repetitive and the visions are not imaginative: the next world looks very like personal pop videos. The story develops into a fairly conventional horror movie, although it has a very proper, old-fashioned moral about atonement, and not interfering with the unknown.

Schumacher reflects sagely: "Just because you're dead for a couple of minutes does not mean you understand eternity any more than being alive for two minutes means you understand life." His background in design shows the experiments are conducted in an extraordinary ecclesiastical-style building, and a good deal of the film is irrelevantly staged in dramatic industrial locations.

Hollywood's other current preoccupation is gangsters. Herbert Ross's *My Blue Heaven* (PG, Warner West End, Cannon Haymarket) takes up where

GoodFellas left off. Steve Martin plays a hoodlum turned informer under a government witness protection scheme. Nora Ephron's script speculates on the possibilities when a life-long criminal is relocated in a polite, boring, crime-free Midwest community.

Her conclusion is cynical: the gangster ends up corrupting the entire community. This, and the portrayal of the mobster as a sympathetic figure, make the film essentially unappealing.

Martin, with a wild hair-do, sharp suits and an uneasy accent, uncharacteristically forces the humour. The core of the comedy is Martin's moral seduction of his FBI minder, played by the short, Canadian comedian Rick Moranis, and a prim woman district attorney (Joan Cusack).

The interpolation of such devices as comic chapter titles and irrelevant dance routines suggests that the film-makers recognised that the comic idea was not enough to stay the course.

The *Mad Monkey* (18, Cannon Tottenham Court Road and Piccadilly) is much what one fears from the notion of a "European film". It is a Franco-Spanish co-production, in English, with a Spanish director and a story designed to accommodate an American star and pan-European cast.

Jeff Goldblum plays an American screenwriter who comes to Europe, is commissioned to write a script for an odious British avant-garde director (Dexter Fletcher) and is seduced by the writer's nymphomaniac sister (Liza Walker), who serves her sibling for bribe or blackmail. It is based on a novel by Christopher Frank, and directed by Fernando Trueba. Enigmatic would be the kind word for its muddled ideas.

The new films inevitably fade away beside Robert Bresson's *A Man Escaped* (*Un condamné à mort s'est échappé*, or *Le vent*



Heart stopping performance: Julia Roberts as Rachel Manus in *Flatliners*, Joel Schumacher's tale of the afterlife

souffle où il vent; U. Renoir). After 34 years it is undiminished and unaltered, still unarguably one of the greatest works of cinema.

A title at the start of the film tells us: "This is a true story. I show it as it happened without any embellishment." The story was based on the account by a young French officer, Commandant Devigny, of his amazing escape from a Gestapo prison in Lyons in 1943. Bresson was also able to bring to the story his own experience as a prisoner-of-war.

This is very unlike the conventional escape film. There is no ordinary dramatic suspense: the title itself tells us the outcome. The violence of beating, execution and the murder of a guard all

takes place discreetly off screen. For most of the film we see through the eyes — and into the eyes — of the prisoner himself. We experience his solitude and share his restricted view, through the high window of his cell. The methodical preparations for the escape are shown in documentary detail: the sharpening of a spoon to make a chisel; the painstaking creation of a rope out of bed springs and torn cloth.

The film is compelling, and even thrilling, less for the action than for the intense and exhilarating spiritual quality that underlies it. The film is about the intense will that drives the man on to escape, the solidarity of humans in extreme privation, and at the

same time the mysterious providence that enables this man to succeed where others fail.

The secondary title of the film, a biblical quotation which was Bresson's original choice of title, is "The wind bloweth where it listeth". In a voice-over commentary, the protagonist constantly marvels at the divine chance that favours him.

This was the first film in which Bresson dispensed entirely with professional actors. He chose people for their faces and the spiritual quality they expressed for him, and formed them in the interior, understated kind of performance that characterises his films. Bresson's people, never seen outside the world of this film,

have their own reality that remains after however many years.

François Leterrier, Jean, with a sensitive face and large eyes, was a philosophy student at the time he played the main role, Roland Modod, as a priest who befriends him in prison, was a journalist; an angry, unsuccessful escapee was one of Cousteau's frogmen. The wretched youth who, having been thrust into his cell, becomes the escapee's unintended partner in the enterprise, was a 16-year-old from an orphanage. He has the film's memorable last line — banality elevated to a glorious poem — which, for the sake of those who have still to experience the marvel of *A Man Escaped*, it would be a shame to reveal.

BRIEFING

Barter over the martyr

OUR own National Gallery has conceded defeat to the National Gallery of Washington over possession of *The Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew* — a major work by the Spanish artist, Jusepe de Ribera — due to lack of funds. *The Martyrdom* achieved a £2.7 million record for the artist at Sotheby's last July when it was bought by the London dealers Agnew. Now David Mellor, the arts minister, has announced a temporary export ban until December 15, in theory offering British institutions a chance to match the price; even so, that kind of money is beyond our galleries.

By command

A WELCOME change has been wrought on the Royal Concert. This year's event, in the Albert Hall on November 20, dispenses with the usual pot-pourri of light orchestral classics. Instead, the Queen will be regaled with a huge chunk of Verdi — Act I of *Simon Boccanegra* — and other operatic extracts, performed by the massed forces of English National Opera and the Royal Choral Society. However, the programme does open with the National Anthem. Let us hope that the conductor, Mark Elder, has quelled the scruples about performing patriotic songs during the Gulf crisis that prevented him from conducting the Last Night of the Proms.

Last chance

WITH his solo show which closes at the Roy Miles Gallery (071-495 4747) on Friday, 37-year-old Sergei Chepik has achieved the most seasonally successful debut in recent memory: 102 of the 103 paintings sold, more than half in the first three days, while the one remaining is on reserve. Chepik's style is not always easy, but his often brilliant colour and dazzling technical skill had would-be buyers on the verge of blows at the gala opening. Even Mrs Thatcher acquired a Chepik to present to Bournemouth. See them now without the razzmatazz in a poppy-field of red stickers.

DANCE

Multi-layered trains of thought

John Percival on Siobhan Davies, one of Britain's foremost choreographers



Paul Douglas and Lauren Potter in *Different Trains*

Two years ago, Siobhan Davies launched her own dance company at a studio theatre in west London. Tonight, in the highlight of this year's Dance Umbrella festival, she brings that company to Sadler's Wells for the first time. She is understandably nervous. It is, after all, a big jump from Riverside Studios with its 400 seats, to Sadler's Wells with four times that number, from a building specialising in new work to a mainstream theatre accustomed to receiving companies of international standing.

But she feels she owes it to her dancers and to her work. "I would like lots of people to see them; I think the dancers I am working with have a very high profile at present, and I have to use their abilities and show them now."

This is another step on the path that has brought Davies quietly and steadily to the top of her profession. At the age of

40, she is the youngest of the few British choreographers who have proved themselves by originality and sustained quality, ranking with Christopher Bruce and Richard Alston among her own near contemporaries and Kenneth MacMillan in the senior generation.

Once offered the chance of becoming director of London Contemporary Dance Theatre, she said she would accept only on condition of a complete change in its way of working. That demand was turned down, so she started her own company instead. Even with this, she avoids the usual pattern of a permanent ensemble and long, debilitating tours. Instead, each year she prepares and polishes a new programme, presents it for a limited run, and then freelances for the rest of the year.

There is no lack of demand for her services: this year she made a new piece, *Dancing Ledge*, for English National Ballet (her first choreography for classical dancers), and another, *Signature*, for Rambert Dance Company, whose director Richard Alston has appointed her associate choreographer.

Davies and Alston are from the same stable. They were both art students who began to take dance classes, part-time, at the newly founded London Contemporary Dance School in the heady mid-1960s, when British dance belatedly discovered Modernism. Before long, Davies was the school's star pupil, taking part in the first London Contemporary season at The Place Theatre, and touring in a joint programme with the Royal Ballet's educational company.

At 21, Davies began making choreography and over the next 15 years created 17 works for the London Contemporary

company. During that time, she also had her first outside commission (from Rambert), presented her first independent season of new works, and was one of the founders of Second Stride.

For her new piece, Davies turns to Steve Reich's minimalist classic, *Different Trains*. She says she finds its rhythms exciting as the composer piles one layer upon another. The Smith Quartet, playing live, will be accompanied by a tape which superimposes up to three recorded quartets, speech fragments and the sound of trains. Reich calls it documentary music theatre, and for him it has a special meaning from his memories of travelling by train across America as a young Jewish boy in the 1940s, and thinking of how

things could be changed if he had been travelling in different trains in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Davies did not intend to reproduce that idea in her dances, but inevitably it was going to colour what she did. What she found, as she worked with the music, was that its layers affected the dancer in different ways. She decided that her choreography also had to be layered with a different response to the train noises and the speech from the swift, continuously developed dances provoked by the quartet music. For the words, she and the dancers began by learning American sign language, translating the speech fragments and telling themselves stories. She then used the sign gestures as the starting point for her choreography.

Siobhan Davies Company opens tonight at Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Ave, London, EC1 (071-278 8916).

CRITIC'S CHOICE VIDEO

A selection of films recently released on video. The year refers to the date of first release, or in the case of television films, of first broadcast.

BATMAN AND ROBIN (RCA/Columbia, 15, two tapes). Columbia's 1949 serial — a marked improvement on their 1943 *Batman*, though still no match for the crazy pomp and circumstance of Universal's serial output. Robert Lowery is the caped crusader.

A CHRISTMAS STORY (MGM/UA, PG). Episodic adventures of a young boy in the Forties, determined to get an air rifle for Christmas. A neglected, frigid delight, based on the writings of American humorist Jean Shepherd. 1984.

THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS (MGM/UA, 15). A blonde singer causes fireworks when she joins up with two cocktail pianists. Great fun, with subtle playing from Michelle Pfeiffer, Jeff and Beau Bridges. 1989.

HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS (U). Minuscule children battle through their garden to safety. Engaging special effects romp from Disney — a family-friendly variation on *The Incredible Shrinking Man*. 1990.

JOUR DE FETE (BFI Connoisseur, U). Jacques Tati's first feature — a radiantly gentle and comic tale of a lanky village postman (Tati himself) trying to speed up his deliveries. Sturdier than the M-Hulot comedies, and just as funny. 1949.

OSSESSIONE (BFI Connoisseur, PG). James M. Cain's spiky thriller. The Postman Always Rings Twice transferred to polemical Italy. A brazen first feature from Luciano Visconti, replete with violent passions, visual grandeur, and penetrating detail. With Clara Calame, Massimo Grotti. 1942.

PETER GREENAWAY: EARLY WORKS (BFI Connoisseur, PG). The seminal, 40-minute orchestral riddle *A Walk Through H* (1978), plus *Dear Phone* and *Water Works* — crisp, useful reminders of Greenaway's achievement before he simplified his style in *The Draughtsmen's Contract*.

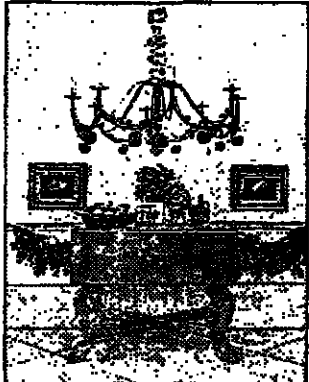
ROSALIE GOES SHOPPING (Palace, 15). Broad, erratic satire from director Percy Adlon and his ample comic muse Marenne Saghebrot, cast as an Affairaire housewife who beats the system with its own weapons. 1989.

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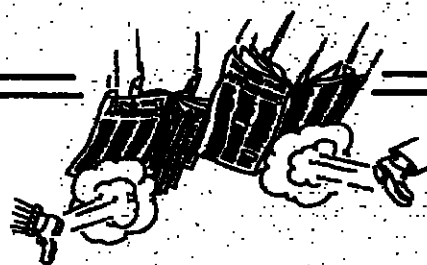
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Three SISTERS

BY ANTON CHEKHOV

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THE TIMES

ARTS

ROCK

The song remains the same

Have rock musicians forgotten how to write new tunes? David Sinclair suggests reasons for the present surfeit of recycled material

Christmas is coming and with it the customary deluge of "Greatest Hits" and similar compilations. Veterans such as Cliff Richard, Elton John, Paul McCartney, the Alarm, Public Image Ltd, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton and Led Zeppelin are among those currently reaping new money from old material of one sort or another. Whether remixed, remastered, re-recorded live or merely repackaged, the raw musical material from which these collections are assembled is virtually all recycled.

Trading on the past in this way has become an established seasonal feature of the rock business and such retrospectives are usually a good deal for artist and consumer alike. The only people that feel cheated are the critics who, being required neither to produce nor to pay for the music they consume in such unseasonably vast quantities, are quicker than most to demand the spice of constant innovation.

Nevertheless, 1990 has been remarkable for the unprecedented degree to which rock and pop performers, young and old, have looked to the past for a supply of songs to keep them in business. From the most basic mainstream pop of Jason Donovan (a straight forgery of the Cascades' 1963 hit "Rhythm of the Rain") to the dance-friendly indie-rock of the Soup Dragons (a reconstructed "baggy" version of the Rolling Stones' "I'm Free"), old songs have played an increasingly central role in the charts.

The most sensational breakthrough of the year was that of Sinead O'Connor with "Nothing Compares 2 U", a dusted-down Prince composition. Other careers which have lifted off thanks to cover versions include those of the

Chimes (a sexy, soulful revamp of U2's "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" which actually improved on the original), River City People (a pallid imitation of The Mamas and the Papas' "California Dreaming") and Candy Flip (the Beatles' "Strawberry Fields Forever", disconcertingly refracted through a prism of Nineties' psychedelia).

The No 1 hit this week is still "Unchained Melody" by the Righteous Brothers, exactly the same record that first climbed the charts in 1965. The song itself was No 1 as long ago as 1955 when it was recorded in less dramatic style by Jimmy Young.

While pundits have been bemoaning the lack of originality in contemporary pop for many years, two extraordinary recent albums have put the current malaise in focus. *Rubáiyát* is a compilation released last month to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the Elektra record label. This handsome artefact features many of the label's current roster of acts performing the songs of their predecessors. So we get Billy Bragg baring through Love's "Seven & Seven Is", the Pixies ripping the heart out of Paul Butterfield's "Born in Chicago", and the phenomenal jazz-inspired guitarist Danny Ganton transforming "Apricot Brandy" into a *tour de force* of funky virtuosity.

As well as being a persuasive piece of corporate public relations confirming the label's off-beat style and continuing integrity of purpose, *Rubáiyát* is also a timely reminder of the legacy that rock now has at its disposal. But is the current crop of rock luminaries capable of adding to it?

Another multi-artist compilation, *Red, Hot and Blue*, set the



Recycled: The Righteous Brothers, whose 1965 hit "Unchained Melody" is at No 1 this week

alarm bells ringing. This widely discussed project, organised in order to raise money for research into AIDS, features a cross-section of contemporary stars - from the American rappers the Jungle Brothers, to stadium-rockers U2 - interpreting the music of Cole Porter. Here the cream of the rock fraternity is to be found seeking inspiration well beyond the traditional boundaries of "Rock Around the Clock", 1955 and all that, and generally making a hash of it. Neneh Cherry's "I've Got You Under My Skin", while charming in its way, bears no relation to the original song but for the actual words of the title.

Those at the other extreme, such as Lisa Stansfield who attempts a faithful recreation of "Down in the Depths", are simply not equipped to deal with the detailed nuances of Porter's work. Set against this consummate songwriting artistry, the inability of current performers to produce new material of such timeless quality is harshly exposed.

Before the Beatles, of course, nobody expected pop stars to write their own songs in the first place. Despite the odd co-credit, Elvis

Presley wrote nothing at all and Cliff Richard still relies on the work of professional songwriters. But once Lennon and McCartney set the ball rolling, rock became a creative juggernaut. Thus the great acts were also the great songwriters of their era: Jagger/Richards, Ray Davies, Lou Reed, Bowie, Costello, Dylan, Hendrix, Sting, Prince, Springsteen, Townsend, Wonder and many more.

As stigmata of performing other people's material, except in exceptional circumstances, developed. This is unique to rock; indeed, the very term "cover version" only has meaning in the world of rock. In the fields of jazz and classical music, it is taken for granted that there is a tried and tested body of work from which most "numbers" in most major performers' repertoires will be drawn. "Where are the Beethovens of today?" pondered classical music critic Paul Griffiths in *The Times* last Saturday, suggesting that the era of the great composers might "turn out to have been a special interlude in the history of western music."

If so, then at least it lasted for

two centuries. Rock's 30-year burst of creative expansion is more comparable to the period of intense innovation in jazz which lasted from roughly 1925 to 1955. Nowadays, although there is a trend towards composition among the new generation of formally trained players (the Marsalis brothers, Courtney Pine and others), the vast majority of contemporary mainstream jazz performers play nothing but "cover versions", although they would laugh at anyone who called them that.

Rock has not done badly for a genre supposedly based on three chords and a four-beat, but it increasingly looks as though the interesting permutations are all used up. There is now a vast trove of proven material to choose from and far too many performers for them all to be great writers. Besides, in the words of Norman Cook of Beats International - who enjoyed a No 1 earlier this year with his dub version of the S.O.S. Band's old hit "Just Be Good to Me" - "People who have good ideas, arrangements and talent but can't write songs, what else are they supposed to do?"

TELEVISION

Odd couple brushed with mutual distrust

IF ever a real-life couple could have been entirely conceived and constructed by Nigel Williams for the sole purposes of appearing on his BBC 2 *Bookmark* series they would surely be Gert and Michael Hofmann. They are in fact father and son: Gert is the German novelist, Michael the poet he exiled to Elton at the age of 14, since when they have lived in separate states of deep mutual dislike and distrust. Michael now reckons he is like the wars on his father's elbow, scratched into submission but still bleeding. He further reckons that his father is like some third world dictator: bloated, outdated and rapidly running to seed.

These are not just the opinions that Michael expresses in occasional international phone calls home: he publishes them in volumes of poetry which are then sent to his father in Germany who unsurprisingly fails to appreciate their artistic merit. Locked together by their immense dislike of each other, but devotion to themselves and their opinions, Gert and Michael were captured by the *Bookmark* camera on a German park bench, looking like refugees from a Samuel Beckett play adapted for the screen by Harold Pinter.

A wonderfully resilient wife and mother noted that her menfolk do not make life at home exactly a doddle when the boy comes to visit: father has only to announce that he is a novelist, and therefore not bound by documentary fact, for his son to rush off into the archives of the local town hall in order to prove that his uncle was really his grandfather.

Kevin Hull's film commendably restrained from any commentary, allowing us to reach our own conclusions. These were of course, that the two men are deeply and unmistakably locked inside each other, bonded if not by love then by the terrible realisation that they are only really defined by their articulate dislike of each other's values and body language. There was no mention of whether or not Michael now has

his own family: if he does, he had better start watching out for the serialisation of his son's memoirs.

Elsewhere last night, *Dispatches* (Channel 4) came up with a report from the Soviet Union about a Moscow mafia which makes Chicago in the Thirties look like Bexhill on a quiet afternoon. After five years of *perestroika*, the market supply system is worse than at any time since the second world war. The old communist guard is determined to protect its privileges and to establish the view that freedom causes chaos. As a result they are now hijacking food supplies and re-selling them in illegal markets with a 1,000 per cent mark-up. Protected by leather-jacketed henchmen, the authorities do deals with criminal gangs to ensure that free enterprise works only when totally corrupted, thereby proving a political point while simultaneously making themselves a black-market fortune.

As Gorbachev goes into the longest and coldest winter of his administration, it looks as though he could be beaten not by any alternative political force, but by gangs of street thugs who have noticed that in a city where 80 per cent of the police are accepting bribes they are unlikely to face arrest. The other 20 per cent of the police are, it seems, running the gangs from which their spare cash has long been derived.

For *Love or Money*, the Channel 4 monthly art series, is settling into a strong mix of business and cultural reporting that might usefully be transferred to the other arts. This week George Melly was on about the cultural significance of wristwatches and Richard Cork was worrying about the tea-toweling and biscuit-tinning of Constable's paintings, which are already overtaken by the tourist trade, although his market value in New York might have been stronger if he had cut off an ear or settled in Tahiti instead of just outside Ipswich.

SHERIDAN MORLEY

THEATRE

Cruising the tough road to success

Jim Cartwright, award-winning playwright, talks to Ellen Cranitch about his latest drama



Cartwright, still reeling from success: "suddenly out of the blue I was being paid to write"

In Jim Cartwright's remarkable first play, *Road*, premiered at the Royal Court Theatre in 1986, it is the young, reticent character Louise who gives voice to the play's and the playwright's burning central question. She does so in Cartwright's striking and inimitable style: "Why is life so tough? It's like walking through meat in high heels."

Cartwright's own journey as playwright, following the phenomenal critical acclaim that greeted *Road*, has borne little resemblance to that image of sluggish progress conjured by his shy, tender creation. *Road* picked up virtually every award for new drama of 1986, including the Samuel Beckett and George Devine, and gave rise to a spate of foreign productions.

Over the next few years, Cartwright produced an array of monosyllabically titled works, including *Bed*, for the National Theatre. Now his latest piece, *70*, starring Sue Johnson and John McArdle of *Brookside* fame, has been chosen to relaunch the Young Vic.

set in a pub where McArdle and Johnson, as landlord and wife, pull pints while engaging in vicious marital combat. Then in a series of deft vignettes they assume the characters of the clientele. In these sharply observed yet compassionate por-

traits of the pub's customers, we hear echoes of Cartwright's recurrent themes - the intense longing for escape from a humdrum, hopeless existence to something richer, purer, more vivid.

We again witness people trapped by their environment, their relationships, their bodies, their own inability to believe in the possibility of change. Yet *70*, along with Cartwright's other plays, is not depressing because he creates for his characters the redeeming possibility of self-expression - heightened, poetic, sometimes running the risk of maudlin sentiment or of being overly alliterative - but nonetheless a speech that soars.

Cartwright still reels from the success of *Road*: "Suddenly, out of the blue, I was a writer, I was being paid to write." The son of a factory worker from Farnworth in Lancashire, he left school at 16 and fell into a motley collection of jobs interspersed with spells on the dole. He is grateful that he did not study literature at Further Education level: "That means everything you write has to pass through a sieve of all these accepted great pieces that have been written."

He insists that he is "an instinctive writer", a writer "in spirit not in lifestyle", and describes the daily battle of his working life: "How do I write? My writing is frantic, ragged, manic. I finally get a piece done when I've passed the deadline five times. I enjoy writing when it's flowing, exciting, musical when it's tumbling out and I'm twisting words. But when I'm not in the mood I hate the slog. When I didn't get paid it seems like it was more fun. I want writing to keep joyous."

When *Road* was first produced, some critics saw a powerful indictment of Thatcherism in its depiction of the down-trodden inhabitants of a decaying northern town. Yet Cartwright insists he is not a political playwright: "I was quite angry when I wrote *Road*, and that's what came out of me. I'm interested in writing about people, their emotions and their circumstances. I'm not interested in writing about political ideas."

He speaks with relish of a writers' workshop he led on "The Spontaneous Monologue". Cartwright turned up at the classroom wielding a stick, having decided to

conduct the workshop in a radically severe style. The workshop consisted of him slamming the stick down and commanding one of the participants to embark on a spontaneous monologue. He laughs as he recounts how petrified some of his pupils were but proudly recalls that - in a few cases - some excellent creative prose resulted.

Cartwright's writing method is similarly spontaneous. He pours it out then selects "the jewels" and works on them. It is a hazardous, informal process that accounts for both the originality and brilliance of his prose and, at the same time, for its lapses into mediocrity and its occasional unfocused, overwrought meanderings. His plays have been criticised for their structural weakness. It is a problem he is currently tackling as he works on an Anglo-American television film where, he indignantly protests, "the dialogue is the least important thing."

TO previews from tonight and opens on Monday night at the Young Vic, 66 The Cut, London SE1 07T (071-928 6363)

POETRY

Verse in Britten's town

ALDEBURGH'S Poetry Festival, which starts tomorrow, is only a year old, but has already emerged as one of the most promising in the country. The latest offering has expanded its educational role and acquired a decidedly international flavour.

The opening night's performers include Gerd Mayer; also appearing will be Miroslav Holub. Both are Czechs of the second world war generation, and they are joined by the Romanian satirist, Marin Sorescu.

To these, Aldeburgh has added George Scire - who is based in Herefordshire but whose growing preoccupations with his Hungarian roots has made him something of a mouthpiece for a temporarily and spiritually dispossessed post-war generation - and the American C.K. Williams. Linking the disparate viewpoints comes this

RODERIC DUNNETT

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REVIEWS

Monster of raging bitterness

THEATRE
The Seagull
Swan, Stratford

WHAT is the result of the coupling of a wolf and a python? The answer is Susan Fleetwood's Arkadina in the climactic moment when she is luring her lover Trigorin from the adoring Nina. Rarely can there have been such growlings, hissings, shriekings and howls as she grabs at his legs, pummels his torso, and will not let him go. Well might Roger Allam's Trigorin look like not just a transfixed, but a swallowed and regurgitated rabbit.

With acting like that at his production's centre, no wonder Terry Hands has trouble cohering his actors into a balanced whole. He was saying in these pages on Tuesday that what interested him about Chekhov's play was the characters' musings about art and drama, talent and creativity. It is doubtless to emphasise this that he keeps the makeshift theatre built by Arkadina's writer son, Kostya, permanently visible among the backstage birch trees. But no such overriding idea makes itself felt. Rather the impression is of a lot of strong, interesting performances not always at one with each other.

Amanda Root, for instance, makes a vivid Nina, powered half into orbit by her girlish enthusiasm in the opening act, utterly earthbound, broken and forlorn in the last. Again, Allam brings real

emotional intelligence to his big scene with her. At first his Trigorin is the exasperated workaholic, mildly justifying himself to his wife's grouching. But gradually he becomes more open, more confidential, touching her arm as, without meaning to, he reveals his disappointment and self-contempt.

His unassuming Trigorin is far from the cynical rogue of theatrical tradition, and Simon Russell Beale equally far from the slim, sensitive plant, the anorexic aesthete who seems often to be there. There is an unfinished childhood to be spotted in both his rage at, and abject adoration of, his impossible mother. And when he speaks of her lover, or the theatre to which she belongs, he stoops, half-crouches and, specs glinting, balefully lets rip: snapping turtle, pot podgily aggrieved infant, part embittered artist.

Embittered. If there is a central emphasis in Hands's production, perhaps it is that basic emotion. The play is peopled by characters hopelessly in love with others, but the ugliness of being unloved has seldom been so widely apparent. Indeed, never have I been so aware of the bitterness of Arkadina's steward Shamrayev, played with brutally clenched fists by Trevor Martin. Little wonder his wife, Cherry Morris's Polina, is so frustrated, so angry. No wonder Kostya, Beale's Masha, faced with both romantic and paternal rejection, has become a tipsy, scowling monster.

But she still plays the monster from its own point of view, unlike Susan Fleetwood. For all her occasional attempts to humanise her, she has observed Arkadina from outside, presenting a portrait of an actress who is either narcissistically posturing round the stage or throwing brassy melodramatic



Franklin climax: Susan Fleetwood and Roger Allam in *The Seagull*

fits of temperament. It is too external, too extreme a view of someone who cannot distinguish real from false emotion. The production simply cannot assimilate so madly rampaging an ego.

fits of temperament. It is too external, too extreme a view of someone who cannot distinguish real from false emotion. The production simply cannot assimilate so madly rampaging an ego.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

THEATRE
Kitchen Matters
Royal Court Upstairs

UNLESS private sponsorship steps in, this awkward comedy by Bryony Lavery will be Gay Sweatshop's last production. Founded in 1974, the company set out to present a more rounded view of homosexuality than was offered by, say, *The Boys in the Band*. Shaffer's *Black Comedy* or the cinema's stereotypes of simpering degenerates and truck driver dykes. Budgets were never anything but tight, and within a few years the company was having to contend with the AIDS scare. Tours had to be cut short because cleaners feared by touching the same doorknob.

Inevitably, in many of Gay Sweatshop's plays could be heard the sound of axes being ground. But in the best plays — Noel Greig's *Poppies*, Andy Kirby's *Compromised Immunity*, both directed by Philip Osment — the axe-grinding merged with the background noise of the drama, becoming the landscape of assumptions where the characters were at home without being required to point out the signposts.

Fifteen years is a long life for a fringe theatre but Gay Sweatshop's particular concerns marked it as unique. Strong doubts exist that a work as subtle as the anti-war *Poppies* could now be mounted by anyone else, which is what makes the ending of the

company's grant such gloomy news.

In this context *Kitchen Matters* becomes a sort of summing up of attempts to change theatre's perceived notions of lesbians. But in doing so, Lavery makes use of plenty of stereotypes herself: the hiker with the unwieldy bosom, the tough-talking leather kid, the humourless vegan. They are characterised in a play being written by an offstage authoress — "She thinks she's Pirandello or someone," complains one of her creations after the disembodied voice alters her motivation. This particular character is Tricia, a blonde Brooklyn Dionysus (wilyly played by Peta Masters) who drops down from her cloud to teach a lesson to homophobe Penny, a power-dressed villainess in acid-green.

After marching through parodies of *Mother Courage*, Dylan Thomas (*Under Milk Kitchen*) and an offstage Ayckbourn party, Stacey Charlesworth's Penny disguises herself as a very fetching lesbian (sorry about the sexist admiration) and goes off to spy on the girls-only junketing. We are now entering *Bachue* country from which a kitchen-sink mum will return with a northern accent and a severed head.

Although the humour is uneven, and one of the songs just does not belong in a piece calling for the end to stereotyping, Nona Sheppard's company has marked the passing of a theatrical enterprise with a sprightly, undiscouraged show.

JEREMY KINGSTON

THEATRE
Monday After
the Miracle
New End, Hampstead

WILLIAM Gibson's sequel to *The Miracle Worker* reached the stage 23 years after the original, perhaps author or management was unsure how the public would react to the spectacle of the cruelly handicapped Helen Keller groping towards sexual knowledge.

A rough-edged touring production of *The Miracle Worker* scored a success in London two years ago through the strength of its central performances. Producer and principal actresses have reunited for the sequel: the same remarks apply, only more so. Adrian Reynolds's thrifty-looking production is woefully cramped; and Gibson's writing leaves grit in place of the expected soft centre.

Still blind and deaf, Helen, now 21, can talk after a fashion; and Daryl Back unconvincingly conveys the effortful, emphatic sing-song of those who cannot hear themselves. Her devoted teacher Annie Sullivan accompanies her to college to translate the lecturer's words into touch language. John Macy, an idealistic young radical with political and literary ambitions, arrives on the scene to help Helen with her book. Annie, though 11 years his senior, falls in love. They marry.

The earlier play was a straight forward re-telling of the moving struggle to communicate with the near-animal child locked in her

world of silence and darkness. The sequel is harsher and more complex, spinning the threads of Annie's frustrated maternalism, John's frustrated professional pride and Helen's emotional curiosity into a sometimes abrasive texture.

The storm that breaks when Annie surprises her husband giving the willing Helen her first erotic kiss steers clear of melodrama. At the very least a well-made play, the work has passages that belong to the great American tradition, from O'Neill via Tennessee Williams to Shepard and Mamet, of laceratingly direct confrontation. Hildegarde Neil (Annie) and Peter Dayson (John) play with an anger that fills the house.

Daryl Back even endows Helen with a touch of priggishness. She is touching in the monologue she hopes to perform in vaudeville, complete with old-fashioned arm gestures. An admirer is jolted out of his romantic intentions by seeing her glass eyes in a saucer by the bed. Such details keep sentimentality uncomfortably at bay, as does the blundering, wailing creature that the self-possessed Helen becomes, stretching her hands out with the blackmailing helplessness of the dependent. It is a measure of the fierce honesty of both play and performers that, while moved by the trim, prim figure's blossoming into confidence and dignity, we guiltily feel a twinge of angry pity for the toll the miracle exacted on those around her.

MARTIN HOYLE

REVUE
Out There Tonight
Dominion

FOR the first 15 minutes it appeared that Shirley MacLaine was going to need some sweet charity from her audience. A nervously delivered patter of barbed political gags, a series of songs on the venerable "after all these years I still get butterflies," but when I hear that applause... theme the omens were not encouraging.

Then something startling happened. The 56-year-old trouper seemed to turn on a valve marked energy, a switch labelled personality and an auto-pilot called sheer professionalism. The proper show had begun.

Her voice is better than ever: brassy or guttural in the belters, sweet and vulnerable for those intimate musical confessions to the high stool. And her dancing defies the decades: she may duck out of the splits in the spool can-can, and employ a quartet of lithesome hoofers to boost the routines, but her limbs (mostly sparsely decorated by black

stringy things) shoot out with that ramrod assurance of old, and her gift for choreographic mimicry is undimmed. Indeed, the most ingenious number in the show is probably the take-off of a Bob Fosse routine: all bowler hats, white gloves and fiddly hand movements.

But cleverness is not what this show is chiefly for. MacLaine fans pay for the display of emotional honesty, expressed in musical melodrama — and she does not disappoint. "This is my hooker-victim medley," she says to introduce the *Sweet Charity* selection, sent up

splendidly (a limp feather boa playing a suggestive role in "Big Spender"). Then comes the reverse side of the coin: the down-trodden little lady hitting back, as in her punch-packing number from *Gypsy*.

Best of all is the warmth of her humour. Not often is the *Sunday Sport* castigated so devastatingly in song. But most of her wit is self-debunking, and often directed at those famous MacLaine extemporaneous experiences. Luckily, the usual number of senses is quite adequate to enjoy this show.

RICHARD MORRISON

NEW RELEASES

BULLDOZER (19). Bullheaded comedy west director Michael Winner not lost in the lachrymose comedy with Michael Caine and Roger Moore as comrades who engage an assassin who kills when they attempt to rob a security vault. Ocean Marlin Arch (71 723 2011) Warner (C) 89 0791

THE FRESHMAN (19). Quirky uneven comedy The Freshman with Kevin Kline as the monster who has a New York City student (Matthew Broderick) as a delivery boy. Warner (C) 89 0791

THE HANDMAID'S TALE (18). Margaret Atwood's novel about a future society governed by a totalitarian, fanatical and unyielding cult. Ocean Marlin Arch (71 723 2011) Warner (C) 89 0791

KID (18). The plot wins no prizes for originality — a stolen car back to town to avenge the family's death — though last-minute director John Dahl's directorial asides are a welcome touch. Ocean Marlin Arch (71 723 2011) Warner (C) 89 0791

LOVE AT LARGE (18). Alan Rickman's debut. Rickman's debut as a novelist with Tom Berenger as a novelist who is the son of an artist who is the son of an artist who is the son of an artist. Ocean Marlin Arch (71 723 2011) Warner (C) 89 0791

YOUNG GUNS II — BLAZE OF GLORY (12). Emilio Estevez's sequel to the first. Rickman's debut as a novelist with Tom Berenger as a novelist who is the son of an artist who is the son of an artist who is the son of an artist. Ocean Marlin Arch (71 723 2011) Warner (C) 89 0791

THE ENCHANTMENT (18). A comedy about a woman who falls for a man who is the son of an artist who is the son of an artist who is the son of an artist. Ocean Marlin Arch (71 723 2011) Warner (C) 89 0791

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CURRENT

AN ANGEL AT MY TABLE (19). Jane Campion's excellent film about the New Zealand writer Janet Frame. Ocean Marlin Arch (71 723 2011) Warner (C) 89 0791

ATLANTIC (19). A film about the life of a young man who is the son of an artist who is the son of an artist who is the son of an artist. Ocean Marlin Arch (71 723 2011) Warner (C) 89 0791

BAD INFLUENCE (18). A comedy about a woman who falls for a man who is the son of an artist who is the son of an artist who is the son of an artist. Ocean Marlin Arch (71 723 2011) Warner (C) 89 0791

BETSY'S WEDDING (18). A comedy about a woman who falls for a man who is the son of an artist who is the son of an artist who is the son of an artist. Ocean Marlin Arch (71 723 2011) Warner (C) 89 0791

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BBC 1

6.00 *Celebs*
6.30 *BBC Breakfast News* with Nicholas Witchell and Laurie Mayer
8.50 *Daytime UK*. A preview of the day's events
9.00 *News*, regional news and weather
9.05 *Brainwaves*. Quiz show hosted by Andy Craig. 9.25 *Dish of the Day*. Rosemary Moon with another recipe idea. 9.30 *People Today*. Adrian Mills and Doherty Jones talk to mothers-to-be about their hopes and fears for the future
10.00 *News*, regional news and weather
10.05 *Children's BBC*, introduced by Simon Parkin, begins with *Playdays* which comes this morning from Vaynor, mid-Glamorgan. 10.25 *The Family News* (r) 10.35 *People Today*. Kaffie Feasit explores arts and crafts
11.00 *News*, regional news and weather
11.05 *Kids*. Robert Kirby-Silk introduces another discussion on a topical subject. 11.45 *Before Noon*. Adrian Mills and Ronika Phillips take viewers' calls while Alan Titchmarsh and Judi Spliers reveal the winner of today's *Brainwaves* quiz question
12.00 *News*, regional news and weather
12.05 *After Noon* features *Rosemary Conley's Diet and Fitness Club*. 12.20 *Scene Today*. Live entertainment from Pebble Mill with Judi Spliers and Alan Titchmarsh. 12.55 *Regional news and weather*
1.00 *One O'Clock News* with Philip Heydon. *Weather*

BBC 2

8.00 *News*
8.15 *Westminster*. A round-up of parliamentary business
9.00 *Daytime* on two includes 9.45 *France and the French*. 10.15 *An exploration of the Christian faith*. 11.00 *Pollution and conservation*. 12.05 *Changes in the English countryside over the last four decades*. 1.20 *PC Pinkerton* and 1.25 *Pinpoint*. 1.30 *News* and weather followed by *You and Me* (r). 2.15 *In the Shadow of Fulgur*. The Bird of Happiness. A look at the plight of the Japanese crane, for centuries a symbol of happiness and long life, but now under threat (r). *Celebs*
3.00 *News* and weather followed by *Wild World: The Return of the Gossamer*. Cameraman Heinz Sielmann sees the lynx as an important regulator of the deer population, and hopes that one day wolves will return to Europe. *Celebs*. Narrated by Anthony Smith (r). 3.55 *News*, regional news and weather
4.00 *Call My Bluff*. Arthur Marshall and Frank Muir are joined by Maureen Lipman, Robin Bailey, Sue MacGregor and Patrick Lichfield. Robert Robinson is in the chair (r)
4.30 *Behind the Headlines*. Jeffrey Archer and Paul Bostang look home in debate over topical issues
5.00 *One in Four*. Magazine series about disability. This week a look at disabled people taking direct action for disability income and accessible transport
5.30 *Clean Slate*. Education magazine.
6.00 *Film: Run of the Arrow* (1956). Red Starager as an embittered ex-civil war soldier whose loathing of the Yankees leads him to join the Sioux nation in their continuing struggle. A strong and unusual film from the cut director, Samuel Fuller

BBC 3

1.30 *Neighbours*. (Contex) 1.50 *Going for Gold*. European quiz show
2.15 *Film: The Private Navy of Sgt. O'Farrell* (1968). Bob Hope and Phyllis Diller thrust their way through a slapstick written farce about naval and romantic manoeuvres in the Pacific during the second world war. With Gino Lollobrigida and Jeffrey Hunter. Directed by Frank Tashlin
3.50 *The Brollies*. Animated adventures of Henry and his weather house friends narrated by David Shaw Parker. 4.05 *Clockwise*. Quiz hosted by Darren Day. 4.20 *Fantastic Max*. Cartoon
4.35 *Uncle Jack*. And Operation Green. Children's comedy serial starring Paul Jones as an eccentric green activist with a secret everyone wants. (Contex)
4.55 *Newsround*. 5.05 *Blue Peter*. (Contex)
5.35 *Neighbours* (r). (Contex) Northern Ireland. Sportsweek. 5.40 *Inside Uster*. 6.00 *Six O'Clock News* with Anne Ford and Andrew Harvey.
6.30 *Regional News*. Northern Ireland. 6.45 *News*. 7.00 *Top of the Pops* introduced by Gary Davies (simultaneous broadcast with Radio 1)
7.30 *Saturday Night*. (Contex)
8.00 *Tomorrow's World*. The regular team is joined by the avuncular Bob Symes, who introduces a method of wallpapering that will not end in tears. Another item reveals why building a dam on the Danube may leave the people of Czechoslovakia and Hungary with nothing to drink

BBC 4

7.20 *Animation News: Mountain Music*. The race of the planet as seen by claymation expert Will Vinton
7.30 *First Sight: All Change*. A bird's eye look at London Transport's staff training regimen adapted after the King's Cross fire disaster three years ago. Wales: Open Space. Northern Ireland: Birds of a Feather. England - East: Second Thought; Midlands: The Midlands Report; Leeds, Newcastle and Manchester: Close-Up North; Southampton: Southern Eye; Plymouth: Western Approach; Bristol: Current Account
8.00 *Red Dwarf III*. Off-beat space sitcom. (Contex)
8.30 *Top Gear* includes Jeremy Clarkson taking the Volvo 240 Estate, the Jaguar XJS and the Audi Quattro
9.00 *Harry Enfield's Television Programme*. CHOICE: Harry Enfield's gifts as comedian and impressionist. He is the voice of the *Springtime* David Steel and Douglas Hurd) promise well for a new series in which 20 new characters will follow in the footsteps of his Stavros and Loadsmen. With so many shots at the target, he is bound to score with one or two. Although Loadsmen became a critique of the unacceptable face of the enterprise culture, as well as a godsend to headline writers, Enfield is equally effective with characters unspecific to place or time. In the new series, he gives examples in *Little Brother*, a hyperactive schoolboy poking in where he is not wanted. The Borens, who are always going on about their cars, and *Old Girl*, a cantankerous pensioner. The Enfield sometimes digresses, but his prolific creator of characters and catchphrases, may not be as far-fetched as it seems at first glance
9.30 *Murder in the Mind*. CHOICE: Eileen Allen is a kindly widow of 63 from Rotherham who has found herself looking after not one, but six, elderly female relatives. Eileen's mother, mother-in-law, three cousins and an aunt, aged 80, 82, 84 and 92, and variously disabled, all in their various ways rely on her for their contact with the outside world. John Pitman's film handles its theme with sympathy and not a little humour, while being unflinching about the burden of care. She admits that she is torn between resentment at losing her husband and becoming responsible for his blind, deaf and immobile mother, and guilt at feeling resentful. She realises that the old women are using her as a sponge to soak up their problems and she says it would be lovely to go away and forget them all. But she cannot bring herself to do so and with her husband dead and no children, her "ladies" at least keep her occupied. (Contex)
10.10 *Smith and Jones in Small Doses: The Working Room*. The Reverends Pennycook and Bottomley discover that their dog collars are just about the only thing they have in common (r). (Contex)
10.30 *Newsnight* with Jeremy Paxman
11.15 *The Late Show* includes Michael Grieve's review of French film maker Marcel Ophüls. 11.55 *Weather*. 12.00 *Behind the Headlines*. See 4.30. Ends at 12.35am

ITV LONDON

6.00 *TV-am*
9.25 *Keynotes*. Another edition of the music quiz hosted by Allstar Dwell 9.55
10.00 *The Time... The Place*
 Discussion series chaired by John Stapleton. The Conservative MP Sir John Stooks, who called for Iraqi hostages and their relatives to stop "mewing and pining" over their plight, meets some of those people concerned who took exception to his remark
10.40 *This Morning*. Magazine series with a family slant presented by Judy Finnigan and Richard Medley. With national and international news at 10.55 and regional news at 11.55 followed by national weather
12.05 *The Ridgelys*. Entertainment for the young (r) 12.25 *Home And Away*. Australian soap about a couple and their foster children. 12.55 *Thames News* and weather
1.00 *News at One* with John Suchet. *Weather*
1.20 *The Home Show*. The first of a new series of creative ideas and practical advice on jobs in and around the house. Today's edition includes Moly Parkin on framing and hanging pictures; Roddy Llewellyn on the garden he designed for Christopher Cazenove; and a tour of Faith Brown's house
1.50 *A Country Practice*. Medical drama. 2.20 *Push Procks and New Trousters*. Fashion programme presented by Sarah Greene and Anna Lee. 2.50 *Talkabout*. Game show for those who have kissed the Blamey stone. 3.15 *News headlines*

CHANNEL 4

6.00 *The Art of Landscape*. Soothing music and images of the natural world
6.20 *Business Daily*
6.30 *Channel Four Daily*
9.25 *Schools*
12.00 *The Parliament Programme* presented by Sue Cameron
12.30 *Business Daily*. Financial and business news service
1.00 *Sesame Street*. Children's preschool educational
2.00 *A Houseful of Plants*. The last in the series about houseplants (r). (Teletext)
2.30 *Dunkirk - A Human Endeavour*. The "spirit of Dunkirk" is explored through interviews with men and women who were involved in the rescue from the beaches of Dunkirk in the spring of 1940. Followed by a discussion about the value of perpetuating wartime memories.
3.30 *The Skits*. British Championship from Basingstoke
4.30 *Fifteen-to-One*. William G. Stewart tests the mettle of 15 contestants hoping to reach the grand final of the tough quiz show
5.00 *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Oprah's *Celebrity Highlights*. Oprah delivers entertaining commentary with past guests, including Tom Cruise, Dolly Parton and Mel Gibson (r)
5.50 *The Adventures of Tintin*. Tintin becomes further involved in his animated adventures on a mysterious island (r)
6.00 *In the Crystal Maze*. Richard O'Brien guides six contestants through the ingenious adventure game show (r)
7.00 *Channel 4 News* with John Snow and Zehab Badawiy
7.50 *Comment followed by Weather*

SKY ONE

5.00pm *Sky One News*. 5.30 *International*. 6.00 *The Big Game*. 6.30 *World News*. 7.00 *World News*. 7.30 *World News*. 8.00 *World News*. 8.30 *World News*. 9.00 *World News*. 9.30 *World News*. 10.00 *World News*. 10.30 *World News*. 11.00 *World News*. 11.30 *World News*. 12.00 *World News*. 12.30 *World News*. 1.00 *World News*. 1.30 *World News*. 2.00 *World News*. 2.30 *World News*. 3.00 *World News*. 3.30 *World News*. 4.00 *World News*. 4.30 *World News*. 5.00 *World News*. 5.30 *World News*. 6.00 *World News*. 6.30 *World News*. 7.00 *World News*. 7.30 *World News*. 8.00 *World News*. 8.30 *World News*. 9.00 *World News*. 9.30 *World News*. 10.00 *World News*. 10.30 *World News*. 11.00 *World News*. 11.30 *World News*. 12.00 *World News*. 12.30 *World News*. 1.00 *World News*. 1.30 *World News*. 2.00 *World News*. 2.30 *World News*. 3.00 *World News*. 3.30 *World News*. 4.00 *World News*. 4.30 *World News*. 5.00 *World News*. 5.30 *World News*. 6.00 *World News*. 6.30 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Muslims fearful, page 14



Mr Christolm also outlined the merged group's new format, which will include Sky One, incorporating the best of BSB's Galaxy, Sky News, Sky Movies, the BSB Movie Channel and the Sports Channel. The announcement came as the IBA said that it needed more detailed information from the former BSB before it could determine which of a "number of options" it would follow, in light of requirements in the

John Kelly, US Assistant Secretary of State, yesterday held talks with Farouq al-Shara, the Syrian foreign minister. He was thought to be trying to ensure that US-Syrian differences on the Arab-Israel conflict do not affect Syria's support for multinational forces in Saudi Arabia.

David Blunkett, Labour's local government spokesman, said the council could not only disenfranchise poll tax protesters but anyone whose name was omitted for whatever reason. People who had only recently moved to an area and had yet to register for the poll tax would be affected if they

Other pecesses in their own right were less spectacular, being obliged to wear standard-issue scarlet, with ermine. The lords do the same, earls enjoying the accessory of a long cape with white ermine sections, and a polecat's tail. Dr Rumic is covered entirely in white ermine and resembled an intellectual sheep. If we could but see the ghosts of tens of thousands of ermines must be shrieking up the walls, on Easter Opening Day.

After the ladies come the diplomats. Their excellencies appear as an illustration from

David Blunkett, Labour's local government spokesman, said the circular could not only disenfranchise poll tax protesters but anyone whose name was omitted for whatever reason. People who had only recently moved to an area and had yet to register for the poll tax would be affected if they

The Home Office said last night that cross references between the registers were designed to ensure that as many people were given the right to vote. Someone who failed to return an electoral registration form would not lose the vote if they were also on the poll tax register and efforts would still be made to check on people who appeared on neither to ensure that they retained the right to vote.

The environment department said that electoral registration officers had the right to inspect both the published and confidential versions of the community

registration officers can grant people exemption from having their names printed in the public register if they fear that it may damage them. Wives of journalists against violent husbands and teachers in inner city schools have already been allowed to remove their names from public registers.

Kensington and Chelsea borough council in London, which agreed last week to adopt the Home Office guidelines, said last night that it would continue to give a year's grace to those who failed to return electoral registration forms.

[illegible]

4-ways/roads M4-M1	732
4-ways/roads M1-Darford T.	733
4-ways/roads Darford T.-M23	734
4-ways/roads M23-M4	735
M25 London Orbital only	736
National traffic and roadworks	
National motorways	737
West Country	738
Wales	740
Midlands	741
North-west England	742
North-east England	743
Scotland	744
Northern Ireland	745
A Roadwatch is charged at 53p per minute (cheap rate) and 44p per	

Sun: 24 hr to 6 pm, all.

Merchandise is charged at 33p per
 lb (cheap rate) and 44p per
 lb at all other times.

Continued from page 1

ing Park, Glasgow G41 1JL, telephone 041 420 1000. Thursday, November 8, 1990.

BUSINESS

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 8 1990

Executive Editor
David Brewerton

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● LAW 34
● SPORT 38-42

SIB plans crackdown in wake of price war

THE Securities and Investments Board wants tougher rules on soft commission deals for share trading after a price war in which four integrated securities houses heavily undercut deals offered by independent brokers to provide non-dealing services in exchange for guaranteed commissions (Graham Seargeant writes).

In a consultative document inviting comments by the end of the month, the SIB aims to clarify rules outlawing "soft for net" deals that would benefit fund managers at the expense of pension fund members, unit trust holders and other fund managers' clients.

ISE operating income falls 6%

The continuing low level of trading has cut the operating income of the International Stock Exchange, but it still managed to break even after interest income in the first half of the financial year. Andrew Hugh Smith, the exchange's chairman, said the exchange was looking for more economies in costs.

Operating income in the six months to end-September was £91.8 million, more than 6 per cent lower than the same period last year. Operating costs were £10 million higher at £95 million, but this includes £5 million spent developing Taurus, the paperless share trading system. The ISE made a pre-tax profit of £1.5 million, all absorbed by tax, against £18.1 million in the first half last year.

Bibby ahead

J Bibby & Sons, the industrial and agricultural group, increased taxable profits by 17 per cent to £33.5 million and earnings by 22.5 per cent to £20.3 million during the year to the end of September. A final dividend of 6.25p makes a total of 12p (8.5p). The shares rose 12p to 125p.

Excilbur issue

Excilbur Group, the jewellery and gifts to precision engineering group, has launched a one-for-two rights issue at 45p per share to raise £8.5 million.

THE FOUND

US dollar 1.9765 (+0.0015)
German mark 2.9302 (-0.0032)
Exchange index 94.3 (-0.1)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share 1580.8 (-8.1)
FT-SE 100 2059.2 (-10.6)
New York Dow Jones 2453.47 (-31.68)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave 23500.25 (-465.50)
Closing Prices ... Page 35
Major indices and major changes Page 32

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base 14%
3-month interbank 13 1/2-13 3/4%
3-month eligible bills 13 1/2-13 3/4%
US: Prime Rate 10%
Federal Funds 7 1/4-7 1/2%
3-month Treasury Bills 7 1/8-7 3/8%
30-year bonds 10 1/2-10 3/4%

CURRENCIES

London: New York
£: \$1.9765
DM: £2.9302
Sfr: £2.4518
FF: £6.5596
Yen: £253.19
Index: 94.3
ECU: £0.71786
SDR: £0.73428
SDR1: £0.73428

GOLD

London: Fixing
444 \$383.50 pm-\$385.00
close \$387.05-\$387.50 (£196.75-196.25)
New York: Close \$387.10-\$387.60

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Dec) \$33.10/bbl (\$32.30)
* Denotes latest trading price

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Bank
Australia \$	2.61	2.46
Austria Sch	21.80	20.30
Belgium Fr	83.10	92.10
Canada Cdn	1.12	1.12
Denmark Kr	11.71	11.01
Finland Mk	10.25	9.82
France Fr	10.25	9.82
Germany DM	3.06	2.81
Greece Dr	348.10	268.00
Italy Lit	1132	1122
Japan Yen	200	200
Netherlands Gld	3.435	3.235
Portugal Esc	200	200
Spain Ptas	166.64	166.64
Sweden Kr	11.36	10.75
Switzerland Fr	2.27	2.17
United Kingdom £	1.00	1.00
USA \$	2.055	1.952
Yugoslavia Dnr	27.00	20.00

Wiggins Teape poised for French merger

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

WIGGINS Teape Appleton is expected to unveil plans today for a merger with Arjomari-Prioux, the French paper maker. The deal is expected to value Arjomari at about £600 million.

Shares in both companies were suspended yesterday after an executive of Saint Louis, the French food group that holds a 40 per cent stake in Arjomari, said a merger was imminent.

The deal will be the first important expansion by Wiggins Teape Appleton since it was demerged from BAT Industries in a £1 billion flotation in June.

A share-swap deal, backed by cash, is expected. London analysts say Saint Louis bought its holding in Arjomari as a way of warehousing spare cash, and would almost certainly rather convert it into WTA paper than have to find it a new home. Shares in the merged company are expected to be traded in London and Paris.

However, analysts say the planned link could trigger a takeover bid for either company from a rival suitor.

Stephen Walls, the former managing director of Plessey, the defence electronics group, who now chairs the WTA board, has made no secret of his ambitions to diversify.

WTA is a world leader in carbonless copier paper, with 50 per cent of the American market and a 30 per cent share of the European market.

Competition is intense, however, and the market is logged by over-capacity, especially in Europe. The

company's sales growth, at 4 per cent to 5 per cent a year, is regarded as being relatively modest.

Arjomari, whose core business is printing and writing-grade paper, is reckoned to have much better growth prospects.

The French company, at its suspension price of Fr1,779 is capitalised at £450 million. WTA, suspended at 163p, is valued by the market at £804 million.

Arjomari has the capacity to make 525,000 tonnes of paper a year. Of that, 370,000 is high-grade publishing paper, which is expected to be in strong demand when the British advertising market recovers.

Colin Tennant, an analyst at Hoare Govett, said the companies would be a good fit. He added that a merger would give them access to economies of scale in pulp purchasing, and propel them into the front rank of the European paper industry.

The deal should also reduce still further WTA's exposure to the flagging British market. Already, 80 per cent of the company's profits come from overseas.

With £170 million of net debt, WTA has gearing of 25 per cent. Despite the high profit margins of paper-making, a significant long-term increase in borrowings might prove unacceptable to institutional shareholders as well as WTA's bankers.

High capital equipment costs make a strong balance sheet essential for any paper company.

But WTA is already in talks

with several prospective buyers for its 43 per cent stake in Soporel, a Portuguese pulp mill. The disposal is expected to raise up to £150 million.

Mr Walls is well known and widely admired in the City thanks to the polished display in his prolonged, though ultimately unsuccessful, defence of Plessey against takeover by the General Electric Company.

The merger between WTA and Arjomari would be the latest in a series of deals that have seen a growing concentration in the European paper industry, which tends to be dominated by Scandinavian companies.

WTA is the largest British-owned paper company, with sales of more than a million tonnes last year. In the year to December 1989, it had sales of £1.5 billion and made a trading profit of £201 million.

Although its core business in carbonless copier paper is under pressure, its Conqueror business stationery has a strong market position.

Sales of its thermal papers, used by facsimile machines, should also grow fast. The company is the leading non-Japanese producer.

Paper merchandising accounts for a major part of its activities throughout Europe. WTA companies employ 12,000 people worldwide.

Soporel, the Portuguese pulp mill, is one of the largest and most advanced in Europe. It has an annual production capacity of almost 400,000 tonnes, and in 1989 supplied 16 per cent of WTA's needs.

The other shares are held by Portuguese banks, institutions, and individuals.



Wheeling in another profit: Lord Sainsbury at the group's Battersea store yesterday

Sainsbury still supreme with a half-time £273m

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

J SAINSBURY, Britain's top supermarket group in terms of sales, market share and profitability, is unlikely to surrender pole position despite competition from Tesco.

The company has increased its market share from 11.3 per cent to 12.1 per cent in the six months to end-September, the largest increase in the group's market share for some time and operating profit margins have risen from 6.51 per cent to 7.34 per cent.

The group's interim results were considerably better than the highest City forecast. Pre-tax profits rose 27.1 per cent to £273.4 million on sales up 15 per cent at £4.28 billion. In Britain, sales rose 17.4 per cent. Earnings per share rose 25.3 per cent to 11.59p and the interim dividend is up 20 per cent at 2.1p.

Lord Sainsbury, the group's chairman, said the group is benefiting from its large number of new stores. About 40 per cent of the stores are less than five years old. The younger the store, the greater the return.

The recession is not denting Sainsbury's growth. Customers are still trading up, in particular buying larger size packets, although this growth has slowed a little in the first half. Lord Sainsbury believes the group is gaining from people eating out less and says new products are also stimulating growth.

Eight new supermarkets were opened in the first half and 12 more come on stream in the second half. The group announced a £200 million convertible capital bond issue to help fund its development programme that is expected to total £750 million this year. A further £150 million is expected to be raised through sale and leasebacks. Lord Sainsbury said the group plans to continue to increase space

at a rate of about 8 per cent a year. Gearing is 40 per cent.

Savacentre, Sainsbury's superstore business, increased profits 10.7 per cent to £9.6 million after meeting the pre-opening costs of the group's new Sheffield store. Operating profit at Homebase, the group's DIY business, grew 20.9 per cent to £6.4 million on sales 10.9 per cent higher but all of this was from new stores.

Shaws, the group's American supermarket chain, was affected by the recession in New England. Operating profits rose 10.7 per cent to \$29 million and sales rose 7.6 per cent to \$944 million. Six new stores are planned this year. The management is concerned

on improving the business's systems.

There are no plans for acquisitions and Lord Sainsbury said building new stores in the 150 locations that have been identified as suitable will keep the group busy for five years. Expansion overseas is likely to be in North America rather than Europe.

Lord Sainsbury said he is optimistic that the group will have a good Christmas. Tony MacNeary of County NatWest has upgraded his pre-tax profit forecast for the full year from £492 million to £510 million clean of property. The shares, which rose 6p to 316p fell to 302p on profit taking.

Comment, page 31

GPT to merge US units with Siemens

By NICK NUTTALL

TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT
GPT, the telecommunications subsidiary of the General Electric Company, is to merge its American public telecommunications operations with Siemens of Germany.

The joint venture will allow the new company to compete more vigorously with AT&T and Northern Telecom, which have about 90 per cent of the American market for computerised public telephone switches and transmission systems.

Richard Reynolds, the chairman of GPT, said the seven American regional telephone companies, known as the "Baby Bells", have been seeking a third buyer.

Mr Reynolds said the merging of operations should put the new company, which will be owned equally by the parent companies, in the picture as a potential third buyer.

The merger will also give the new concern between 7 and 8 per cent of the market, compared with the estimated 3 per cent by its numerous smaller rivals.

The new company has been formed by a merger of the Stromberg-Carlson Corporation, which was bought in 1984 by Plessey, and Siemens Communication Systems, which was set up in the same year.

The venture will be known as Siemens Stromberg-Carlson. Although the company is being split evenly, the majority of profits will flow to Siemens, which has a 40 per cent stake in GPT after the acquisition of Plessey by GEC and the German company.

Mr Reynolds said the new company, which will have 4,000 employees based mainly in New Mexico, Florida and Arizona, was expected to have a turnover of \$400 million this year.

Details of the deal coincided with GPT's announcement of what is claimed to be British Telecom's first significant order for intelligent networks. The BT contract, worth £14 million, is for advanced intelligent networks that will work with GPT's System X exchanges, allowing the telephone company to offer increasingly sophisticated services on its long-distance network.

These services include personal telephone numbers, voice messaging, video telephony and teletexting.

Soviet oil seeks to attract West's aid

By MARTIN BARROW

THE Soviet Union is seeking joint venture partners in the West to develop oilfields with estimated reserves of almost 6 billion barrels.

The Soviet oil and gas ministry is making available seismic and production data spanning five regions, including the oil-rich Western Siberian fields, to encourage greater involvement by western companies in the country's ailing oil industry.

Aklm Mukhametzanov, deputy oil and gas minister, heads a delegation that has arrived in London via Houston to promote a second round of joint venture packages. These include interests in 21 oil and gasfields and three exploration areas.

The Russians are also asking western companies to review an area the size of the United States, extending from Siberia to the Black Sea, and make their own proposals for joint venture packages.

The visit follows a decision by the Soviet Union to introduce a commercial rouble exchange rate on November 1. It will apply to foreign investments in Russia through joint ventures with Soviet enterprises. Profits attributable to non-Soviet companies may now be re-invested or transferred outside the Soviet Union.

Berisford cuts stake in Rayner

By ANGELA MACKAY

THE final leg of Berisford International's re-financing programme has been completed after the company cut its stake in Rayner, the coffee business in South America, from 65 per cent to 35 per cent.

Rayner has arranged a funding package of £230 million, which includes some £144 million in secured and unsecured bank finance, \$33 million of loan finance from Berisford, \$23 million of local credit lines and \$30 million in partners' capital.

Two groups of Mexican and Portuguese investors, together with the management, have bought the stake sold by Berisford. Rayner managers will take 39 per cent of the equity, Berisford 35 per cent and the new investors 26 per cent.

The transaction, arranged by Charterhouse Bank, removes £154 million of third party funding from Berisford's consolidated balance sheet and completes the refinancing of Berisford's £1.2 billion debt until June 30.

Murray Stuart, chief financial officer of Berisford, said: "On completion of the sale of Berisford's leasing subsidiary, agreement for which was recently announced, these two transactions will reduce Berisford's net group borrowings by £100 million and remove exposure to indemnities relating to its leasing book of about £48 million."

Derek Allen, chairman of the coffee division, resigned from the main Berisford board yesterday.

Berisford put all its assets up for sale in July after a disastrous foray into the New York commercial property market forced write-offs of £200 million. The company's prime asset, British Sugar, is being sold by tender and Berisford hopes a deal, raising at least £1 billion, will be agreed by early next year.

A possible bid by Tate & Lyle is being considered by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, while Associated British Foods was given clearance in September to make an offer.

Swamped by lobbyists campaigning for some of the world's biggest computer names, the European parliament has already shied away from advocating restrictive rules. The European Commission is considering testing firms to carry out "maintenance", or to check that they remain compatible. Most EC

states are less keen, believing this will fudge the issue and provide "sharks" with an excuse to plagiarise the work of their competitors. Britain believes ministers will drop the "maintenance" clause, but is otherwise happy with the compromise. Officials expect EC trade and industry ministers to clear the way for final agreement by Christmas, rather than settle the matter today.

Mr Sugar is not alone in defending the most open rules. Bull, of France, and Fujitsu-España have also made their presence felt in Brussels, while IBM has lobbied for curbs on reverse engineering as part of its campaign to secure a bigger foothold in Europe's lucrative software market. But as one commentator put it: "This is not the American multinational versus the Europeans nor the big firms versus the small ones. It is the innovators versus the makers of bog-standard computers."

Hunting the sharks circling Europe's computer industry

All at sea over software pirates

From PETER GUILFORD IN BRUSSELS

EUROPEAN Community ministers meet today to decide how to stop computer "sharks" from pirating the software programmes of their competitors without driving Europe's cut-price computer industry out of business.

Such terms as "reverse engineering", "inter-operability" and "decompiling" have become key words in one of the fiercest lobbying wars seen in Brussels.

At issue is the right of one computer maker to analyse the software of another to see how it works. All 12 EC states agree that this process of "reverse engineering" must be allowed if the market in compatible software is to survive. They also agree that programme designers must not be allowed to abuse the process in order to create directly competing products.

They are divided, however, on where

to draw the line and how to reprimand those who cross it.

A warning shot came from Alan Sugar, chairman of Amstrad and British pioneer of the cheap computer, who last week threatened to move manufacturing from Scotland to the Far East if the trade department allowed Brussels to restrict his right to analyse rivals' programmes.

Mr Sugar has since been reassured by the government that he "got it out of proportion", but his reaction is symptomatic of the worries afflicting many computer firms.

Swamped by lobbyists campaigning for some of the world's biggest computer names, the European parliament has already shied away from advocating restrictive rules. The European Commission is considering testing firms to carry out "maintenance", or to check that they remain compatible. Most EC

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Foreign staff 'remains last resort for companies'

By COLIN NARBROUGH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

RECRUITING abroad remains a "last resort" for most companies, despite serious skill shortages in some sectors, and the fast-approaching single European market.

This is the main conclusion in a study in the latest *Employment Gazette* on the role of foreign workers in the labour market by John Salt of University College, London, and Robert Kitching.

The study says that new survey evidence suggests that employers' poor knowledge of labour markets abroad, and Britain's relatively low pay levels, limit their scope for hiring foreign workers.

Furthermore, for some companies the greater concern was being able to hold on to

staff in Britain rather than being able to recruit from their competitors in Europe. "In response to this, defensive rather than offensive recruitment strategies were the order of the day," the study concludes.

"Most employers wanting skilled workers continue to poach staff from their UK competitors, but there was plenty of evidence that companies could no longer poach so easily, and, as a consequence, had increased their own training facilities."

Growing skills shortages are regarded as an important factor, maintaining high earnings growth in Britain in the face of the economic slowdown brought about by the government's counter-inflationary squeeze.

Business surveys have repeatedly found that companies have failed so far to prepare for the single European market in goods, services and

labour after 1992. Between 1984 and 1988 the numbers of foreign nationals working in the United Kingdom rose by 10 per cent to 1.12 million, equivalent to 4.5 per cent of the total labour force.

The Irish formed the biggest national group, accounting for nearly a quarter of all foreign nationals and two-thirds of workers from the European Community.

Half of the overseas workers are in the vibrant, service-oriented South-East. In London alone they fill one job in eight, with hotels and catering relying heavily on foreign workers.

But foreign workers are not solely in low-paid jobs. In socio-economic terms they largely reflect the home population. One in five is in professional, managerial or employment positions. An interview survey of four

sectors in the summer of 1989 showed that in financial sector companies, foreigners accounted for up to a third of staff.

In electrical engineering, percentages were generally lower; in health, the range was 5-10 per cent; in hotels and catering it was not uncommon in London for more than half the workforce to be foreigners.

While transnational corporations have successfully developed internal labour markets, transferring staff from one country to another, the study found that few United Kingdom employers are actively recruiting overseas to fill jobs in Britain.

However, in the City, the most common view is that London provides a major international resource pool for the financial services industry, allowing skills shortages to be met locally.

ADRIAN BROOKS

British Steel seeks cash injection from Japanese

By ROSS TIEMAN AND KERRY GILL

BRITISH Steel has been holding talks with Japanese and German rivals in search of a joint venture solution to its problematic Scottish operations.

A cash injection from a partner could enable modernisation of key plants, eliminate a competitor, and avoid further closures and job losses in Scotland.

Ian Lowe, an analyst with Smith New Court, the broker, said: "My belief is that they would regard that as an elegant solution to the problem."

Talks so far are believed to have revolved around the Clydesdale tube works in Lanarkshire, and the Imperial Works at Airdrie, where a thread is cut into the pipes so that they can be joined. The plants employ about 1,700 people.

Sir Robert Scholey, British Steel's chairman, highlighted losses at Clydesdale at BS's annual meeting on July 27. British Steel has already announced the closure of its Ravenscraig strip mill on April 5 with the loss of 770 jobs.

A review of BS's plate-making operations, including the Dalzell Plate Mill at Motherwell, Lanarkshire, is expected to be reviewed by Sir Robert and his board soon. British Steel believes it has too much plate-making capacity.

With the future of three steel processing plants under question, Scottish trade unionists are increasingly concerned that British Steel's entire Scottish steel-making operation is being undermined.

The integrated steel-making works at Ravenscraig is one of five operated by British Steel. Its costs are believed to be among the highest in the company, partly due to its unfavourable location. A Japanese partner would be most attractive for BS. Although

Japanese companies have been highly competitive in selling small-bore seamless oil and gas pipe to the North Sea energy industry, they face high transport costs.

Mannesmann, of Germany, Vallourec, of France and the Italian Dalmine, three of Europe's leading steel companies, are also believed to have been canvassed, but they would probably be interested only in using the smaller Imperial plant to finish tube made overseas.

Prices of tube products have been severely depressed in the wake of a doubling of European capacity.

But City analysts believe an upturn is developing, making a deal over Clydesdale more likely.

After a year without placing orders, the Soviet Union is believed to have contracted to buy 185,000 tonnes of tube from a Japanese consortium at prices 10-20 per cent above prevailing prices. Mannesmann is believed to have a 40,000-tonne order.

Shop stewards called on British Steel to announce plans for investment in all the Scottish plants, including Clydesdale.

John Lafferty, the works convenor, said: "I am hoping they will force together some plan for investment at Clydesdale."

The unions say between £12 million and £15 million must be channelled into Clydesdale to modernise its two mills, built in 1948 and 1956.

Clydesdale can produce a maximum of about only 200,000 tonnes a year, in spite of the rest of the plant enjoying modern facilities.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Scottish secretary, has written to Sir Robert, asking him for details of Clydesdale's future. A spokesman for British Steel did not know whether Sir Robert had yet replied.



Serious challenger: Gerald Scanlan, Allied Irish Bank's chief executive yesterday

AIB ahead with £109m

AIB Group, the Irish bank, has given a warning that it will have difficulty maintaining its profits this year. The bank said achieving the same profits is a "serious challenge."

AIB was reporting a 10 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £121 million (£109 million) in the six months to end-September. The bank was helped by a £12 million profit on the sale of a stake in the Dublin cable television

provider, and the benefits of an £160 million rights issue in May.

Dilution from the rights issue caused a 5 per cent fall in earnings per share to £12.1p, although the bank increased its interim dividend by 12 per cent to £13.5p.

Profits were held back by falls at the British and American divisions, due to increased bad debt provisions. The group-wide provision rose 117

per cent to £160.4 million.

Paddy Dowling, AIB's deputy chief executive, said the bank is planning to invest up to £120 million in a financial services arm to sell products via its Irish branches. AIB is awaiting approval from the Irish industry and commerce department and hopes to begin operations within six months.

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Mint firm criticised for breach of bid rule

By NEIL BENNETT

THE Takeover Panel has criticised Birmingham Mint and Chartered WestLB, its merchant banking adviser, for a serious breach of the Takeover Code. The breach concerns Birmingham's agreement to invest £1.5 million in equipment following a hostile bid from IMI, the metals group.

The panel gave IMI the opportunity to withdraw its £12.2 million bid because of Birmingham's investment in a nickel plating plant. But IMI has decided to press home its 85p a share cash offer.

The panel's ruling came after a complaint from IMI that Birmingham had broken rule 21 of the Takeover Code by making a material investment during a bid.

Samuel Montagu, IMI's adviser, was forced to pulp its offer document after discovering that Birmingham had bought the equipment. If IMI wins the bid, it may negotiate to cancel the contract.

Birmingham signed the formal purchase order to buy the plating plant on October 25, three days after IMI launched its offer. Birmingham first cleared the purchase on October 18, a day after IMI met the company to discuss possible terms for an agreed bid.

Neither Birmingham nor Chartered WestLB asked the panel for permission to make the acquisition.

The Takeover Code forbids companies to make material acquisitions during a bid without holding a shareholders' meeting to approve them. This is to prevent companies using an acquisition as a so-called poison pill to try to frighten off predators.

The investment in plating equipment was a main factor behind IMI's bid, which hoped to save on investment costs by combining its minting operation with Birmingham. The two companies operate the only private minting plants in Britain, and need improved plating equipment due to a growing call for cheaper coinage. IMI is negotiating to buy a similar plant.

Tony Cross, Birmingham's chairman, said he accepted the panel's ruling.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Foseco in cash buy for American group

FOSECO, target of a £237 million hostile takeover bid by Burnham Castrol, has acquired the American Certek Group, which uses technical processes to carry out maintenance on the refractory linings of ovens and copper converters while still hot. The acquisition is for a cash consideration of \$2.65 million, with \$500,000 payable on completion and the balance spread over seven years.

Bob Jordan, group managing director of Foseco, said Certek's operations were complementary to his company's high technology Fosebel business, in which Glaverbel, of Belgium, holds a 49 per cent interest. "This is a small but important acquisition which will play a significant part in strengthening Foseco's technical lead and the geographical coverage of our growing Fosebel business," he said.

Gieves slips into the red

THE Gieves Group, which owns Gieves & Hawkes the tailor, and Redwood Burn the book and magazine publisher, made a pre-tax loss of £105,000 in the six months to end-July compared with a profit of £249,000. Sales rose from £233 million to £272 million. The interim dividend is 1.5p down from 1.6p. Shares in the group fell 1p to 110p.

Gunn retires from RHM

John Gunn, who supervised the rise and collapse of British & Commonwealth, the financial services conglomerate, is retiring from the board of Rank Hovis McDougall, the food group. RHM has appointed Michael Beckett, the former managing director of Consolidated Goldfields, and Mr A M B. Large, from Swiss Bank Corp, to the board.

Job cuts at Renault

RENAULT plans to lay off 4,732 people next year, reducing its workforce to 63,128, according to union representatives at the French state-owned car-maker. Renault declined to comment, but has already said it plans to cut 2,346 jobs this year and expects attributable net profit to drop more than 50 per cent to 4 billion francs, with production falling 3 to 5 per cent next year.

The European Commission announced it has approved an alliance between Renault and Volvo of Sweden, that will produce the world's biggest heavy truck maker and the seventh largest vehicle manufacturer.

Calor to sell transport firm

CALOR Group, the bottled gas concern, is selling its transportation business to Transport Development Group for slightly below its net asset value of £7 million. Alistair Pate, finance director of Calor, said although the disposal would show a small book value loss in the current year, longer term it would have a favourable impact on earnings.

Rand Mines pays out 90p

Rand Mines, the South African mining group, maintained its final dividend at 90p, making an unchanged total of 90p for the year to end-September. Pre-tax profits declined from £130.3 million to £126.2 million. Earnings per share fell by 17 per cent to 1.592 cents (1.529 cents). Operating profits grew by 6 per cent.

Souza profits plunge

Souza Cruz, the Brazilian-based subsidiary of BAT Industries and one of the country's largest companies, reported net profits of just 4.50 billion cruzeiros for the first nine months of 1990, down from 10.448 billion cruzeiros for the comparable period to the end of September 1989. Results for the third quarter show net losses of 509 million cruzeiros. The figures have been adjusted for inflation.

BAT, which owns 75 per cent of Souza Cruz, stressed that the results must be "significantly" adjusted before they are consolidated into its own accounts. The downturn was mainly attributed to further tobacco losses.

Stormgard in £75,000 losses

By MARTIN BARROW

STORMGARD, the office supplies and stationery supplier, incurred £75,000 pre-tax losses during the half-year to end-June, against profits of £1.4 million for the first six months of 1989.

Losses were struck before a £2.17 million extraordinary charge in respect of trading losses by Jacquard, a fashion-wear business expected to be sold in the second half, and by discontinued operations.

Receipts of £87,000 in deferred taxation left a £12,000 profit before extraordinary charges and earnings of 0.04p a share (3.75p). There is no interim dividend (1p).

David Dunn, group chief executive, blamed a squeeze on margins caused by severe price competition and higher raw material costs, which had not been passed on to customers. Export sales declined as a result of the strength of sterling and uncertainty caused by the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq.

Turnover was virtually unchanged at £25.7 million, against £25.5 million but operating profits fell from £1.33 million to £583,000. Higher interest rates pushed interest charges up by almost £200,000 to £580,000.

ISE wins its first insider case

By JON ASHWORTH

THE International Stock Exchange has brought its first prosecution for insider dealing since broader powers were introduced in July.

Peter Bernard Lukins and John Henry Lukins appeared at Taunton magistrates' court yesterday and pleaded guilty to charges of contravening the Company Securities (Insider Dealing) Act 1985.

Peter Lukins was fined £500 on two counts of insider dealing, plus £229 costs. John Lukins was fined £750 on three counts, with £432 costs. The prosecution follows an investigation into dealings in the shares of Pittard Garnar.

Mike Fehnam, head of the Stock Exchange's insider dealing group, said wider powers introduced following an amendment to the Companies Act would speed up straightforward investigations.

"This case demonstrates these powers are invaluable where the exchange has compiled evidence to the necessary criminal standards and where the additional investigative powers of DTI inspectors are not required in order to obtain a successful prosecution," he said.

GM signs DM600m car deal with Czechoslovaks

From PETER GREEN IN PRAGUE

GENERAL Motors Europe has signed a preliminary contract with a Czechoslovak car maker to produce cars and gearboxes in Czechoslovakia.

The agreement, signed with Bratislava Automobile Works (BAZ), the government-owned parts maker, calls for production to begin in 1992 on 250,000 gearboxes a year for GM assembly plants in Europe. The plant will eventually produce GM cars for the Czechoslovak market.

The deal involves an initial GM investment of DM600 million, possibly rising to more than DM1.5 billion. It is

the first substantial venture between a Western car-maker and Czechoslovakia's vast automobile industry.

Skoda, the country's largest passenger car maker, is expected to decide this month whether it will enter a multi-billion pound joint venture with Germany's Volkswagen or a smaller venture with the French-led Renault Volvo consortium.

Andrej Barcak, the former Czechoslovak foreign trade minister who is president of GM's Czechoslovak operations, said the new venture would renovate existing plant

capacity. In a second stage of production, GM will produce new versions of its Opel Kadett and Opel Vectra cars solely for sale in Czechoslovakia. GM will also set up a franchised dealership network.

Mr Barcak said a final, full contract would be signed by December 15, 1990.

GM already has several facilities in Eastern Europe. An Opel Vectra assembly line is under construction in eastern Germany and an engine factory and passenger car assembly plant will open in Hungary in 1992.

Nadir family's finance man expected to break silence

From MARTIN WALLER IN GENEVA

JASON Davies, the former Stockbroker whom the Serious Fraud Office are keen to question about the Polly Peck affair, is expected to break his silence in Geneva over the next fortnight.

His lawyer confirmed that Mr Davies was still in Switzerland and that an earlier plan to put his side of the story at a press conference had been postponed. She would not give a reason for the postponement.

Mr Davies runs Nadir Investments, which administers the personal finances of

Asil Nadir and his family. He is still working full-time at the company's headquarters some miles outside the city, sources in Geneva suggest. The offices of Nadir Investments form part of an extensive farm in the village of Givrin.

But he was not there yesterday. Pam Cobb, an employee of Nadir Investments, said that Mr Davies had no comment to make at the moment but that he expected to speak some time in the middle of this month.

Mr Davies has been under pressure to reveal the links

between Nadir Investments and various Swiss companies which have dealt heavily in Polly Peck shares in recent months.

But he has always refused to comment. The postponed press conference was supposed to have been held in the middle of last month, at around the time that administrators were appointed at Polly Peck.

Maire Knopfel, Mr Davies's lawyer, said in Geneva that any further announcement would not be before November 16.



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Where next for the food barons?

COMMENT

Five years ago Lord Sainsbury, chairman of Britain's top food retailer, was telling those who wanted to hear that J Sainsbury had a further five years of growth in the Britain before the country was saturated with supermarkets. Today he is saying much the same thing. The timetable has rolled forward, he says, because the situation is dynamic and the demand for new, exciting food products is almost unlimited.

But long term investors are coming to realise that the golden days of the supermarket like Sainsbury, Tesco and Safeway are inevitably limited. True, the new supermarkets are more profitable than people perceived five years ago, and costs make up a lower proportion of sales.

Improved efficiency means that towns which once were written off as too small to support a superstore are being reconsidered by the food retailers. Sainsbury has identified 150 locations where it would like to have new stores and finds it profitable to shut down old stores and open new ones, even when a new store costs in excess of £15

million to build. Sooner rather than later, however, the rapid expansion of new selling space — the great engine of growth — must slow down as the supermarket of Britain runs out of new locations.

In common with the other supermarket giants, Sainsbury is going to have to think about diversification eventually. Among Britain's leading companies only Sainsbury, Tesco and Argill are relatively undiversified. By comparison nearly every other top fifty company has a presence in overseas markets or in sectors complementary to its core activity. The single mindedness of Britain's food retailers is even more staggering when it is remembered that five of them account for more than 60 per cent of the British grocery market.

Sainsbury, which has been consistently ahead of the pack on almost every issue, including centralised distribution, scanning, own label and labour

relations, has a presence in the US through Shaws and in the UK DIY market with Homebase. But these businesses are tiny compared with the UK supermarket business and the group is unlikely to make a significant acquisition for some time. Increasingly, the City will focus on the overseas operations of Sainsbury, and wondering when and how Tesco will make its own inevitable move towards fresh fields abroad.

Oil nerves

Markets are growing increasingly nervous, especially in Japan, about an outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf and the further sharp rise in oil prices that will be the inevitable result. Even without some

damage to production facilities in Kuwait and, much more seriously for the West, in Saudi Arabia, the Saddam episode will ensure that strategic planners look elsewhere for secure long term supplies.

One of the many ironies of the end of the cold war is that the Soviet Union, our former enemy, will be regarded as a preferred future supplier with huge potential. The latest offer of seismic data and joint venture opportunities by Moscow are assured of a warm welcome in the West.

Meanwhile, the current outbreak of nerves in financial markets is probably overdone in the short run. Since Iraq occupied Kuwait in August, the fear which dominated spot oil markets was of shortages during the northern hemisphere winter when consumption is at its

highest. But thanks mainly to a successful response from Opec to make up the Kuwait shortfall, the worst of the winter now looks like passing uneventfully with supply and demand in balance.

For investors, the point to bear in mind is that once the Gulf problem is resolved, or even if there is a long term stalemate, the onset of spring next year will almost certainly bring a renewed weakness in oil prices and the sight of Opec meeting again with a view to defending its 1900 price target of \$21 a barrel.

Sugared pill

Berisford International has taken six months to hammer together its rescue refinancing. This has given management enough time to organise and orderly sale of British Sugar and complete a radical restructuring program. Pats on the back are due to

chairman John Sclater and his advisors for this effort, shareholders in the company have little to comfort them with the shares dead in the water at 29p compared with 149p when the troubles started.

Berisford is banking on someone paying at least £1 billion for British Sugar, which should eliminate debt entirely and leave the executives little to do but wait for the British and New York property markets to improve. Once the international property portfolio is emptied, Berisford will be just a shell.

Holders of Berisford stock are still anxiously awaiting a verdict on whether there will be a cash distribution to them after the sale of British Sugar. Unlike investors in British & Commonwealth or Polly Peck, they still have a tradable asset, but no-one wants to crystallise such a hefty loss. The decision to repay shareholders some of their losses fortunately lies with the board for administrators have a record of looking after banks better than shareholders. Let's hope the company puts a premium on loyalty.

AIB sitting pretty as investors feel pinch



Bargain hunting: Richard (left) and Michael

AIB Group's shareholders are feeling grumpy at the moment. They begrudgingly subscribed to an £160 million (£144 million) rights issue in May, the second in 18 months, to fund a bid for Baltimore Bancorp which never emerged. Now, AIB is sitting pretty on a heap of capital, while the shareholders have suffered an £11p a share paper loss.

AIB's prospects look gloomier than they have for years. While pre-tax profits rose 10 per cent to £121 million in the half-year to June, the company said that achieving last year's attributable profit in the full year would be a "serious challenge".

Profits only rose at all thanks to a £12 million gain from the sale of a stake in Cablelink, the Dublin cable company, and an estimated £6 million benefit from the rights issue proceeds. Earnings per share fell 5 per cent to £12.1p. The only compensation AIB can offer is an increased half-time dividend of £3.5p, up 11 per cent.

The problems stem from newer businesses. Operating profits in Britain fell 73 per cent to £15.3 million due to sharp increases in both bad debts and operating costs.

American business was also hit by bad debts, and profits fell 41 per cent to £12.9 million. Until now, First Maryland, AIB's subsidiary, had escaped the ravages of property market collapse on the east coast, but it could not be immune forever.

Pre-tax profits for the year might still reach £120 million, putting the shares at £148p, on a p/e ratio of seven. It will take the bank some time before it recovers the confidence of the Irish institutions.

J. Bibby & Sons

Few British companies can honestly say that the worst effects of the recession are now behind them. After two difficult years in 1988 and 1989, J. Bibby & Sons, the industrial and agricultural group, may prove to be an exception.

Just 12 months ago Bibby published annual results that made grim reading at a time

when the true extent of the downturn in British industry was not apparent. Since then much progress has been made. Paper and converted products, affected last time by fast-rising wood pulp prices, have bounced back, while each of the three other divisions increased operating profits.

The result has been a 17 per cent increase in taxable profits to £33.5 million for the year to

the end of September, well ahead of expectations, and earnings up 22.5 per cent to 20.36p a share. The total dividend rises from 8.5p a share to 9p, with a final of 6.25p. The shares rose 12p to 129p.

In a competitive environment a keen eye has been kept on costs but the company has not forgotten the wider scene. Six acquisitions have been

made, each with a strong European theme, for a total of £26.6 million. However, borrowings remain under control, with gearing restricted to 26 per cent of shareholders' funds.

With Barlow Rand, of South Africa, holding 86.5 per cent of Bibby, the shares are unlikely to set pulses racing but hold attraction as an income stock. At current levels the yield is 9.8 per cent, which offers more support than a prospective p/e of 6.4.

Excalibur

MICHAEL and Richard Griffiths, Excalibur's chairman and managing director, plan to use the proceeds of their £8.5 million rights issue to fund further expansion, at a time when they feel there are bargains to be had, and to reduce short-term borrowings.

Gearing stands at about 95 per cent, but should come down to 60 or 70 per cent by the year-end.

The issue price of the new shares at 45p compares with a previous closing price of 58p. The shares fell back to 51p on the news, giving an ex-rights price of 49p.

The company has a good record in acquisitions. It has bought 23 companies since 1987, including nine which were loss-making and have since been turned round.

Excalibur has also agreed to acquire Price & Orpin, an engineering company which makes components for the aerospace and vintage car markets, for £1.3 million. It looks like a good buy — considering that Price has net assets of £1.5 million, including £700,000 in cash and made pre-tax profits of £450,000 in the year to end-May, on sales of £1.7 million.

Excalibur estimates that pre-tax profits for the six months to end October will not be less than £2 million (£1.7 million). It intends to declare an interim dividend of 0.4p (0.3p), and forecasts total dividends of 1.8p (1.35p).

Analysts have upgraded forecasts to £5.7 million for the year, giving earnings on the enlarged capital of 8.3p per share and a p/e of 6.1. The rights looks good on a longer-term basis.

No soft option for SIB

The lighter regime of City regulation championed by David Walker when he became the second chairman of the Securities & Investments Board is facing a tricky test over the obscurely technical issue of soft commissions for share trading. So far, the SIB's sensibilities are leading it into murky waters.

The idea of soft commission is that, in return for guaranteeing trading commission to a broker, fund managers can specify what services they want in return. The great advantage of this system, pioneered in this country by the American-owned Hoening and Javelin Securities, is that the fund manager does not just receive whatever research a full service broker provides, but can choose, for instance, research from independent analysts.

In practice, most fund managers are more interested in having overheads such as electronic screen services provided out of commission. Partly as a result, conflicts of interest arise between managers and savers that are inherently likely to lead to abuse. Commissions are paid by clients, such as pension funds, while overheads would otherwise come out of managers' fees.

Tying business to a broker — a device to limit day to day competition — might lead to too much commission being

paid or share trades not being executed at the best price available. The SIB resisted calls to ban the practice, already common in America.

Rules set out in July attempted to cover abuses, including banning so-called "soft for net" arrangements that tied fund managers to market-makers. These could hardly pay the market-maker unless the fund lost the advantage of trading at the best prices in the market.

BZW, the biggest of the integrated broking/market-making firms, set up Thamesway, a separate soft commission broking offshoot, to avoid this abuse. Brokers have a duty under the Financial Services Act to secure the best prices for their clients.

But within days of the new SIB rules, Warburg Securities, the second biggest integrated house, heavily undercut prevailing soft commission rates and was swiftly followed by the other leading integrated houses apart from BZW. Under these deals, fund managers need pay soft commission equal to only 1.2 times the value of other services provided, instead of the prevailing 1.75 times.

This immediately led to the suspicion, especially among the soft commission brokers, that "soft for net" arrangements were being resurrected in another guise or that the broking deals were not eco-

nomically without the benefits of extra trading volume for the linked market-makers.

Sir Gordon Borrie, director general of fair trading, started an enquiry to see whether cross subsidies were being offered, with the effect of undermining competition by shutting out independent brokers. Warburg has insisted throughout that its cost structure allowed it to offer this apparently cheap deal without losing money on its agency business. Fund managers queued to ask the SIB whether they could take these deals.

The SIB agonised. Mr Walker said he was philosophically opposed to interfering with market forces in detail, for instance by forcing integrated houses offering soft commissions to follow Barclays' lead.

Yesterday, the SIB came out with its response, a "clarification" in the form of a consultative paper. This would essentially put the onus back on fund managers. Richard Britton, its international director, said: "SIB's message to the fund manager would be the same as its message to investors: if the deal looks too good to be true, then it probably is."

The SIB wants to add riders to its rules. These would oblige the fund manager to confirm that the soft commission broker is committed to deal at the best price and to use professional judgment on

whether that is feasible at the rate offered. If the fund manager does not have the resources to monitor the dealing performance, the only answer is to opt for a demonstrably independent broker.

Since the SIB admits it cannot tell whether a particular rate of commission is economic, however, this may not be too easy for the average fund manager, who also probably has a vested interest.

Nigel Johnson-Hill of Hoening says he has no doubt that a commission multiple of 1.2 times is uneconomic. But Warburg, a highly respectable group, says firmly that it does not cross-subsidise its soft commission package and is confident that it executes deals at the best price.

Few fund managers are likely to admit to clients that they cannot monitor the performance of their brokers. Even company trustees of pension funds may not be neutral, since they often pay managers fees while commissions come from the fund.

Mr Britton admits, the proposals "are not necessarily our long-term position". Since the soft commission system is essentially a restraint of trade, and no-one seems to be battling unequivocally for the saver, Sir Gordon Borrie may instead have the last word.

GRAHAM SEARJEANT
Financial Editor

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Broackes sings Canary praises

CANARY Wharf will be a success, according to Sir Nigel Broackes, chairman of Trafalgar House, which built the steel structure of the main 80ft tower. But it may, he says, take at least five years before its success is proven. "It is a question of when, not if," says Broackes, aged 56, who will participate today in the tower's topping-out ceremony, signing the steel pyramid with a blue felt pen before it is lifted by crane on to the top of the building. Broackes was the first chairman of the London Docklands Development Corporation, from 1979 for five years, and has been keeping a close eye on its progress ever since. "I visit it once every six months," he says. "It's an unusual development of supreme quality and it is of interest to the whole of the London, even national, property scene." He thinks the tower could support office rents elsewhere in London. "It will add 10 million square feet to the 70 million already in the City and the 100 million elsewhere in central London." However, he is adamant that fears that the Reichmans, the main investors, could have overstretched themselves financially, are unfounded. "Their's was really the only company in the world with the credibility to take on a project of this scale and it is streets ahead of anything in the US or elsewhere in Britain, in terms

of scale, views, environment and column-free design. London hasn't seen anything like it for 200 years, and yet most people haven't seen it and don't even know where it is."

ANGLIAN Water has won a drilling and tapping competition which sounds as if it was aimed at musical dentists. The contest was really designed to discover which water company is fastest at drilling a hole in a mains pipe and, under pressure, putting a thread into it to make a connection. Anglian's two-man team completed their task in a record 4mins 39secs, and it perhaps goes without saying that Anglian's shares have been one of the best performers of all the privatised water authorities.

Wu-ing investors HONG Kong will keep its place as a leading financial centre, even after China takes control in 1997. This is the

view of Gordon Wu, managing director of Hopewell Holdings and one of the region's most colourful businessmen. Wu, aged 54, who studied civil engineering at Princeton University in America — his English is a cross between a New Jersey and a Chinese accent — is known for his forthright views. He was in Britain to meet analysts this week. He believes prospects for the colony are better than ever. "Hong Kong is not a place for the faint-hearted, but this is where the opportunities are," he says. "China will renounce communism in the end." Wu, whose personal stake in Hopewell is worth £240 million, has built a string of power stations in the region and is planning a 180-mile highway connecting Hong Kong with Shenzhen and Canton. He flies to Bangkok tomorrow to sign a \$3.2 billion contract to build an elevated railway and road network in the Thai capital.

ing in public relations on November 29 in the Coach & Horses, just off Fleet Street. Falshaw would have approved. He was a stalwart of the financial journalists' darts team of a decade ago, a legend as much for his red braces — and matching pocket handkerchief — as for the darts he threw. A trophy commemorating both the braces and the darts will be played for annually. All proceeds will go to the British Heart Foundation.

Double topping

CHAMPAGNE corks — own brand, of course — will pop next week at J Sainsbury, the supermarket group, as Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover, its chairman, celebrates his fortieth year in food retailing. His fellow directors are organising a dinner to celebrate the occasion on Monday and more than 400 of his friends, family, employees and Sainsbury veterans have been invited. Lord Sainsbury's 88-year-old father, Lord Sainsbury of Drury Lane — it is the only family with two independently created peerages — will also be there. In fact, Lord Sainsbury junior has calculated that the assembled guests will have 8,000 years of service to Sainsbury between them. The menu is a secret, but there is just a chance that Sainsbury's American-style ice-cream and its new hamburgers, Double Niners, both favourites of Lord Sainsbury, will feature.

CAROL LEONARD

Gnome service

CONTRARY to popular opinion, financial journalists and public relations people can work hand in hand — if only for the right kind of cause. Friends of the late Tony Falshaw, former stock market reporter at the Daily Mail, who died after a heart attack two years ago, are planning a tribute to the man they affectionately called "The Gnome" this month. It will take the form of a darts match between a team of financial journalists and former backs now work-



"The trading performance of the Group's main operations reflect the mixed experiences of our three key marketplaces and are considered satisfactory."

Gerald B Scanlan
Group Chief Executive

Interim Earnings Up By 13%

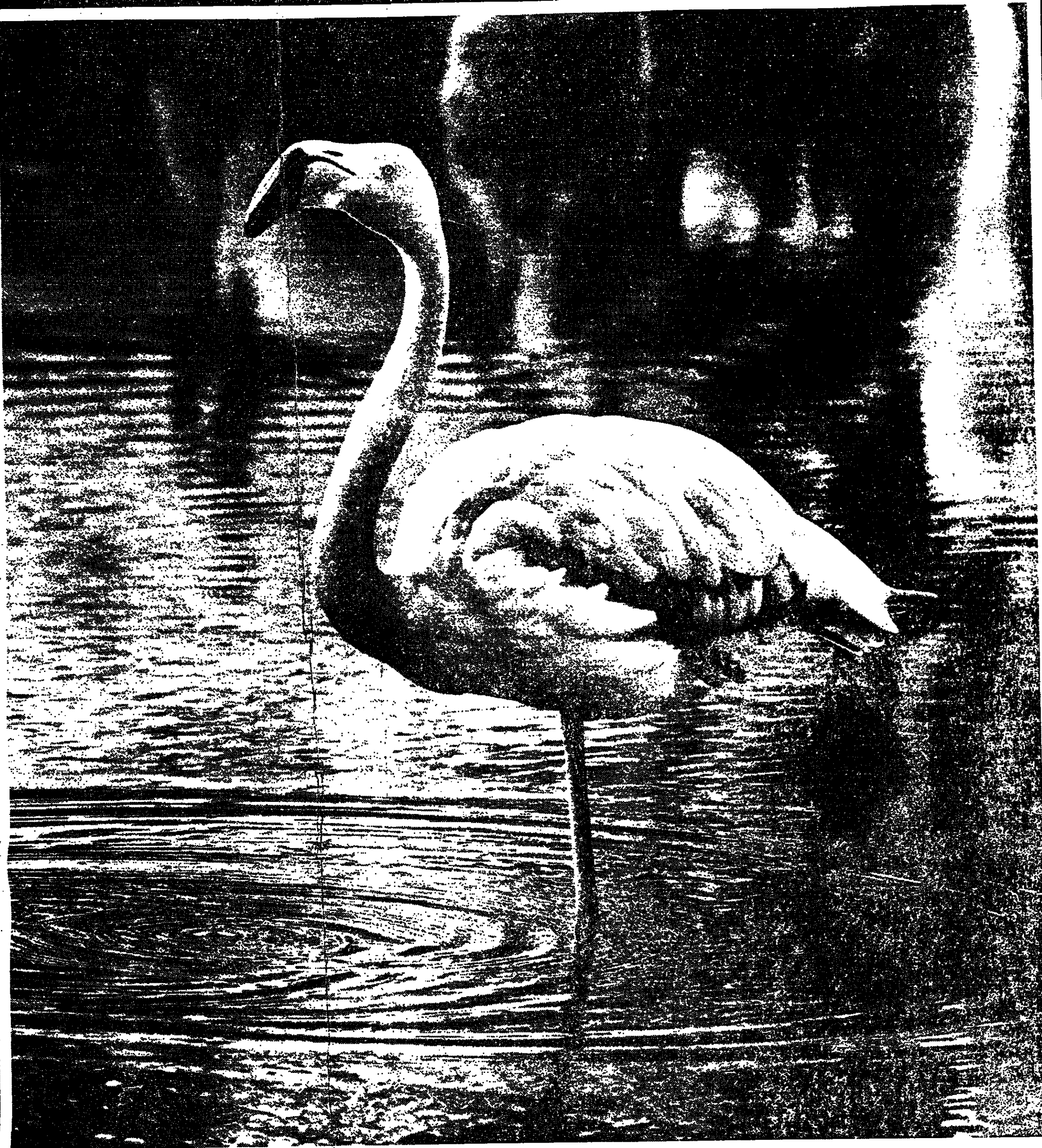
Pre-tax profits rise to stg £111m, up 10.3%

Interim dividend stg 3.2p, up 11.5%

Earnings per share stg 11.1p

Allied Irish Banks plc

If you would like to receive a copy of the interim report, available from 16 November 1990, please write to Group Librarian at AIB Bank, Bankcentre, Belmont Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex or telephone 0895 72222.



WHAT DOES ANGLO AMERICAN SHARE WITH THE GREATER FLAMINGO?

Salt. And soda ash, an essential ingredient in the making of glass, steel and paper.

Both are found in abundance in the Sua Pan in north-east Botswana, home to vast breeding colonies of the Greater Flamingo.

And now home to an exciting new project that will bring prosperity, growth and development to the people of the area.

And provide a secure sanctuary for the Greater Flamingo.

The future of Southern Africa lies in partnership. Between people. Between private initiative and democratic governments. And between people and their environment.

Soda Ash Botswana, a £190 million project in a corner of the Sua Pan, meets all these criteria.

It is the fruit of a partnership between the Botswana government, AECI, De Beers and the Anglo American Corporation of South Africa. From 1991, under the technical leadership of AECI, it will begin to produce 300,000 tons of soda ash a year, making Southern Africa self-sufficient in this vital product.

But Soda Ash Botswana has not forgotten that Sua Pan is also the site of another, more ancient, partnership. For when the rains come these desert wastes provide a vital link in the life-cycle of Southern Africa's flamingo population.

And so Soda Ash Botswana buried

power lines which could be hazardous to birds in flight.

It appointed a former director of the Wildlife and Nature Parks of Botswana to monitor the project's environmental impact.

It established that by bringing brine to the surface the project may attract even more flamingos to its small corner of Sua Pan.

And it is creating a game sanctuary near the plant to ensure they will be safe.

It takes financial resources, expertise and foresight to invest in a partnership on this scale. Partnership that is the key to a better future for all Southern Africa.

Thinking ahead. Thinking big. As well as taking care of the detail. It's what we do. And what we do best.



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Exchange index compared with 1985 was down at 94.3 (day's range 94.3-94.4).

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LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

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CRICKET

Gower lacks motivation in country mismatch

FROM ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT
PORT PIKE

WHEN a team of international standing confronts utterly inept opposition, they can do no more than win impressively. A 111-run margin suggests England met this yardstick yesterday, but, in reality, this mismatch at Memorial Park achieved precisely nothing.

The South Australia Country XI was no better, and certainly no more competitive, than a reasonable English club side. And yet, while the result was never remotely in question, England's batting fell somewhere between careless and patronising, with Graham Gooch and David Gower both squandering the opportunity to make their first substantial scores of the tour.

It mattered not a jot in the context of this fixture, which was a rare throwback to the kind of ambassadorial jaunt which has largely disappeared from modern tour schedules, but it was far from comforting to see our two senior players still patently out of sorts, with weighty engagements now imminent.

Gower, of course, has never been much of a one for games when the stakes resemble a beer match on the village green. Arguably, it was pointless to pick him. Reprehensible though some will find it, he simply cannot motivate himself for picnic cricket and his failure here, chipping a return catch after one flurrying silky stroke, was not even a surprise.

It was, however, an im-

mense disappointment for the 4,000 spectators who had greeted Gower with noisy enthusiasm. Small wonder. Port Pike, 140 bland miles north of Adelaide, is earning something of a reputation over alleged lead pollution, but it is not a town which sees much in the way of quality sport.

The last time an English touring side played here was in 1970, when the MCC label was still worn outside Test matches. That practice ended in the mid-70s, but yesterday's scorecards, and local newspapers, announced the visitors as MCC. Word of Gooch's fame has plainly not spread to these parts, either, at the official dinner, he was introduced first as Peter and then as David.

Ray Illingworth's 1970 team won by ten wickets here. The previous MCC visitors, in 1946, were by 400 runs. Gooch's side was not quite so emphatic after being put into bat on a pitch which offered enough to encourage all types of bowling.

The Country XI purveyed all types, too, from left-arm seam to leg-spin, and the one English batsman who treated it with the right mixture of acquisitive irreverence was Wayne Larkins. Not a man to miss out when cheap runs are on offer, Larkins made the first century of the tour. He was dropped when on 50 but, before giving himself up, there was much to admire in the touch and fluency of his shots.

Larkins was a second notable victim for the leg-breaks of garage mechanic Simon

Fuchs, aged 20, who had already decorated the greatest day of his young career with the wicket of Gower. He was immediately to add that of Alec Stewart, who pushed his first ball straight back to the bowler and turned sharply on his heel as if remembering a more urgent appointment.

The collapse found England with nobody padded up and Smith might almost have been timed out before eventually padding away the hat-trick ball and offering his bat to the jovially jeering crowd.

Smith, at least, looks in bristlingly confident mood and there was an encouraging, though not entirely convincing, innings from John Morris. The impression left by England's batting, however, was one that is unlikely to check the growing air of complacency evident among Australians.

After an extended lunch break among the multi-colored tents, it was stiflingly hot when England took the field, but both Bicknell and Fraser relished the conditions and bowled with far too much skill and imagination for some strictly limited batting.

Bicknell, who may very well have a surprisingly important role to play in the Ashes series, dismissed both openers inside his first three overs and, at 50 for five, it seemed that the Country XI might be heading back to their day-jobs with only an embarrassing tale to tell.

Instead, a neat 57 from Chris Richards and some effective agricultural blows from John Robins secured a

measure of respect before the contest was hastened to its end by three wickets from a man who, only a few hours earlier, had begun to believe he had played his last match.

England's flight from Adelaide on Tuesday evening coincided with a vicious electric storm which buffeted the light aircraft unmercifully. Phil Tufnell is not a happy flier at the best of times and had been offered a safe passage home in those terrified moments he would assuredly have taken it. By last night, with wickets in the bag and his bowling beginning to wear the self-assured badge which brought him here, he was happy to take to the air a few more times in a good cause.

ENGLAND XI
M A Atherton c Kenny b Hayne 36
W Larkins c Jackson b Fuchs 110
A Stewart c Fuchs 10
J E Morris b Kenny 30
J A Stewart c and b Fuchs 10
R J Smith c and b Hayne 10
G A Gooch c Ellis b Kenny 10
D G Smith not out 14
M P Bicknell not out 14
Extras (b 1, lb 1, w 1, nb 9) 23
Total (7 wickets down) 253

AUS. CRICKET XI
A R C Fraser did not bat
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-91, 2-108, 3-178, 4-178, 5-180, 6-210, 7-227.
R J Smith 1-10, 2-10, 3-10, 4-10, 5-10, 6-10, 7-10, 8-10, 9-10, 10-10, 11-10, 12-10, 13-10, 14-10, 15-10, 16-10, 17-10, 18-10, 19-10, 20-10, 21-10, 22-10, 23-10, 24-10, 25-10, 26-10, 27-10, 28-10, 29-10, 30-10, 31-10, 32-10, 33-10, 34-10, 35-10, 36-10, 37-10, 38-10, 39-10, 40-10, 41-10, 42-10, 43-10, 44-10, 45-10, 46-10, 47-10, 48-10, 49-10, 50-10, 51-10, 52-10, 53-10, 54-10, 55-10, 56-10, 57-10, 58-10, 59-10, 60-10, 61-10, 62-10, 63-10, 64-10, 65-10, 66-10, 67-10, 68-10, 69-10, 70-10, 71-10, 72-10, 73-10, 74-10, 75-10, 76-10, 77-10, 78-10, 79-10, 80-10, 81-10, 82-10, 83-10, 84-10, 85-10, 86-10, 87-10, 88-10, 89-10, 90-10, 91-10, 92-10, 93-10, 94-10, 95-10, 96-10, 97-10, 98-10, 99-10, 100-10.

AUS. CRICKET XI
J Mitchell c Smith b Bicknell 4
W Larkins c Stewart b Bicknell 57
C Richards c Bicknell b Tufnell 2
J Vaughan b Fraser 2
R J Smith c and b Tufnell 10
J Gooch c Bicknell b Fraser 28
J Bicknell c Bicknell b Fraser 28
J Fraser c and b Tufnell 11
S Richards c and b Tufnell 5
M Richards c Fraser b Atherton 5
Extras (b 3, w 1) 12
Total 128

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-4, 2-13, 3-14, 4-49, 5-50, 6-108, 7-108, 8-108, 9-114, 10-114, 11-114, 12-114, 13-114, 14-114, 15-114, 16-114, 17-114, 18-114, 19-114, 20-114, 21-114, 22-114, 23-114, 24-114, 25-114, 26-114, 27-114, 28-114, 29-114, 30-114, 31-114, 32-114, 33-114, 34-114, 35-114, 36-114, 37-114, 38-114, 39-114, 40-114, 41-114, 42-114, 43-114, 44-114, 45-114, 46-114, 47-114, 48-114, 49-114, 50-114, 51-114, 52-114, 53-114, 54-114, 55-114, 56-114, 57-114, 58-114, 59-114, 60-114, 61-114, 62-114, 63-114, 64-114, 65-114, 66-114, 67-114, 68-114, 69-114, 70-114, 71-114, 72-114, 73-114, 74-114, 75-114, 76-114, 77-114, 78-114, 79-114, 80-114, 81-114, 82-114, 83-114, 84-114, 85-114, 86-114, 87-114, 88-114, 89-114, 90-114, 91-114, 92-114, 93-114, 94-114, 95-114, 96-114, 97-114, 98-114, 99-114, 100-114.

which contained four sixes and 23 fours, was his 27th century for South Australia, a record neither Peter Taylor nor Trevor Hobbs, whom Hooke hit for 22 in an over, could make any impression with their spin.

New South Wales began their defence of the Shield in style, beating Tasmania by an innings and 20 runs at Sydney. They totalled 489 for nine declared. Steve Waugh scored 83 and Mark Taylor 183, his fourth successive first-class century in Australia, all of them on his home ground.

New South Wales have re-

Scene set for new telephone service

By RICHARD STREETON

A DIFFERENT telephone service for county cricket scores and much more will operate next summer in a joint venture by BBC Audiocall and Broad-system, who have won the contract previously held by Cricketcall. Each county will have three separate telephone numbers available for the various facets of the new consortium's plans.

The service will be known as Cricketscene. The first number for each county will give scores, updated half-by-half from the ground. This will be done by a computer, which will also provide background statistical facts. Reports, commentary and interviews, in conjunction with BBC local radio, will be heard on the second number. These will be "freshened" every 15 minutes. Cricketscene differs from its predecessor in that it will only provide live commentary at the most important stages of a match.

A switch to ball-by-ball commentary, though, can be made instantly at the commentator's discretion when justified. The third Cricketscene number is a cricket quiz line, which will have prizes on offer.

BBC Audiocall and Broad-system beat three other rivals to secure their three-year contract from the counties. Cricketscene will bring the counties a larger royalty from the calls made than previously.

Among the losing applicants was Rapid Cricketscene, part of William Hill Leisure, who have given over £400,000 to cricket in the past two years and who sponsor the Second XI county championships. They retain the franchise to provide live telephone commentary on Test matches and one-day internationals and will also continue their own county scores service.

Edwyn Williams, general manager of Supercall, British Telecom's parent company for "deeply discounted" services, said: "I am disappointed that their contract had not been renewed. The company intends to remain in cricket with a scores service available from Australia, but has not yet decided whether to continue to run a county scores service next summer."

After first concentrating on Test matches, Cricketscene led the television and radio coverage of county games in 1987 when Essex matches were covered as an experiment. A three-year contract followed with all the counties, who each quickly benefited financially.

Essex remained the leaders in every respect and in 1989 earned £57,000 from Cricketscene revenue, though this dropped a little last season.

Broken lace saves Cousins

ICE SKATING

HUGH ROUTLEDGE



Classical style: Soames skates towards the national women's title at Basingstoke

By JOHN HENNESSY

STEVEN Cousins, defending his Skate Electric British championship at Basingstoke, saved the day, for otherwise he was distinctly out of form. He managed to land two triple jumps and a double axel, which should have told heavily against him.

Meanwhile, Yip had produced three triple jumps and a double axel, but did not achieve the same silky-smooth presentation of his original programme when one judge had preferred him to Cousins. Now she, too, deserted him, giving the champion a clean sweep.

Earlier, the judges had voted against the favourite in the women's event. They really had no choice, since Joanne Conway had placed herself on a lower scale of values by ducking a triple jump, in her case the

salchow, in the original programme combination.

First place therefore went to Jackie Soames, aged 23, three years Conway's senior. Soames was only sixth last year, but this time she skated superbly, using a strong, high triple toe loop as a glittering springboard.

RESULTS: Men: First Soames, 23.0; 2. Cousins, 22.0; 3. Yip, 21.0; 4. P. Cousins, 20.0; 5. P. Cousins, 19.0; 6. P. Cousins, 18.0; 7. P. Cousins, 17.0; 8. P. Cousins, 16.0; 9. P. Cousins, 15.0; 10. P. Cousins, 14.0; 11. P. Cousins, 13.0; 12. P. Cousins, 12.0; 13. P. Cousins, 11.0; 14. P. Cousins, 10.0; 15. P. Cousins, 9.0; 16. P. Cousins, 8.0; 17. P. Cousins, 7.0; 18. P. Cousins, 6.0; 19. P. Cousins, 5.0; 20. P. Cousins, 4.0; 21. P. Cousins, 3.0; 22. P. Cousins, 2.0; 23. P. Cousins, 1.0.

On the second occasion, he succeeded with the combination and that, we must assume, saved the day, for otherwise he was distinctly out of form. He managed to land two triple jumps and a double axel, which should have told heavily against him.

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Neither Forrester nor Mould could have been greatly distressed when the match was won by Cousins, for they had both been playing a big win by either could have allowed Nicol to usurp fourth place. Both teams would have been fully stretched since the scoring system allows a second carry-over to the final.

At Portcawl, entries were turned away from the over-subscribed Welsh National Congress. With many senior Welsh players in the last fortnight, the heavy favourites, despite winning last year and the year before.

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SPORTS LETTERS

Sad day for armchair viewer

From Mr B. P. Cook

Sir, I am one of the countless thousands who became disillusioned with football two decades ago as the witless hordes took over, both in the dugout and on the terraces.

This summer, as England performed their heroic on-field and the supporters seemed to have been tamed, a huge potential reservoir of spectators and fans like myself looked forward to a new dawn in the attitudes of the clubs.

I expected the Spurs v Liverpool match last weekend to be a splendid exhibition of everything that is good in the game, with unbeaten league records to protect and the cream of British talent on view. The annual "crisis" of Liverpool actually losing a game in mid-week only added to the anticipation.

However, once again I saw a "professional" display of closing people down, stopping the other team from playing, fierce commitment and other such hackneyed phrases, all amounting to a successful outcome for Liverpool but a sad day for the armchair viewer.

Nothing new in this, I suppose, with Kenny Dalglish obviously under great pressure to "get a result," but the observations of Brian Moore, Jimmy Greaves and Lawrie McMenemy were akin to rolling back the years to the dark ages of Don Revie.

I must expect such hardened critics to dismiss the unfairness

of the "offside" goals as irrelevant, but to refer to an elbow in the face as "one of one and half a dozen of another" and persistently fouling as "falling over the Liverpool player's legs" does nothing to bring about the change in attitudes so necessary if soccer is to thrive again.

The final irony of choosing Burrows as man of the match, a player who should have been under suspension for his "professional" foul on Wallace the previous Wednesday, summed up the smug attitude of those observers who have grown rich out of the national game but are unfortunately still unable to realise that the missing millions have never returned to the terraces, or encourage their children to do so, while such cynical views hold sway.

Fans down the ages have shilled to see Matthews, Best, Blanchflower, Charlton, Greaves himself, and now Gascoigne is the people's favourite. It made me sad not just to see his talents blunted by fair means and foul, but to sense that the experts were somehow grateful that unpredictability, pure talent and unbridled enjoyment of this magnificent game had once more been frustrated by "the system."

Oh well, I can always count on go shopping on Saturday afternoons. Yours sincerely, B. P. COOK, 4 The Coppice, Kelvedon Hatch, Brentwood, Essex.

Deserving better

From Mr Donald Leggett

Sir, I would like to add some comments to Richard Burnell's sound review (November 6) of the British rowing team's performances in the world championships in Tasmania.

We have some outstanding oarsmen in Britain. Burnell suggests that they did not achieve their optimum. I suggest that we should be examining and reviewing those who fill the directing and coaching roles. It is in these areas that I suspect we are inadequate to achieve the ultimate goal of gold medals.

Last year the services of Penny Chuter were disposed of amidst considerable controversy. Under a different title,

Bruce Grainger was appointed to fill a very similar role. The person who was missing from the coaching line-up was Mike Spracklen, outstanding coach for many years.

He went to Canada (after being turned down by the Amateur Rowing Association) to be their chief coach. It is just coincidence that in his first year the Canadians won a silver medal in the premier event, men's eights, from nowhere last year? The Canadians won three other medals in Tasmania.

It might seem I am arguing that Spracklen should have been given his head over here. In fact, I believe the decision to turn him down was correct.

However, I am looking forward to hearing and seeing what solutions will be put forward by the crack East German coach, Jürgen Grottel, whom Leader is busy negotiating to appoint on a professional basis. If he does come, will the British squad oarsmen use his services?

So many British coaches have full-time jobs outside the sport. Our top-class oarsmen deserve more. This is the next problem the ARA has to solve.

Yours faithfully, DONALD LEGGETT, 1 Penlee, Cavendish Road, Weybridge, Surrey.

Sports Letters may be sent by fax to 071-782 5046. They should include a daytime telephone number.

Contempt for world title

From Mr N. W. P. Cole

Sir, Much has been made in the press, since his defeat by Evander Holyfield, of the "contempt" with which James "Buster" Douglas is said to have viewed the world heavyweight championship.

The article has even been declared, True, Douglas's preparation before the fight was hardly thorough, but how honest has the post-fight analysis been?

As a boxer without a distinguished record of achievement, who nevertheless stepped into the same ring as the unbeaten Mike Tyson, Douglas could hardly be fairly accused of cowardice.

Following his remarkable victory in this contest, it is evident that Douglas, a man with little real appetite for fighting, did not go out of his way to prepare for his first defence of the crown. What he did do, with intelligence rarely seen in the shady world of professional boxing, was to realise his limitations as a journeyman fighter. Offered \$2.5 million, win or lose, to defend his title, he took the money and ran, or in this case, fell.

This may have offended the sensibilities of those who regard large sums in the hope of seeing blood. It may also have upset those who put the world title ahead of health and safety in their list of priorities. Yet for many people, put in Douglas's position, would have done the same as he did? If truth be told, I suspect the overwhelming majority of the public would have shown equal respect for a gaudy, ephemeral crown.

It is the greed of the promoters, casino-owners and so-called racing "coders" who show true contempt for the world title by bringing boxing as a whole into disrepute.

I am, sir, yours faithfully, N. W. P. COLE, 4 Thurston Close, Alveston, Derbyshire.

The old guard

From Mr Mark C. Daniel

Sir, What a fascinating article John Goodbody's was on age range in sport (October 20). May the strictly amateur game of rugby be allowed in on the act?

When he represented the United States of America against the United Kingdom in March 1988, John Carey was (probably) in his late sixties.

In the March 1984 match between the UK and the US, the youngest player was an American aged 16 and the oldest an Englishman aged 67. Is there any other physically active sport with an age span of 51 years at international level?

However, I think pride of place — so far — must go to Ronald Youngs, who had probably attained his 70th birthday when representing Jersey against the US in March 1986.

Yours faithfully, MARK C. DANIEL, Park Avenue, Stagsden, Bedford.

Affronts to rugby etiquette

From Mr Rob Thomas

Sir, The disgraceful assault by Mendon on Ackford in last Saturday's England v Argentina rugby international demands tougher action than a four-week suspension. This blatant punch was an unprovoked affront to the necessary norms of rugby and could have seriously injured Ackford.

Over the last 15 years this type of atrocious behaviour has been curtailed in the British Isles by the introduction of disciplinary panels enforcing sensible match suspensions.

Furthermore, for particularly nefarious incidents the addition of professional players has broadened the disciplinary constraints to other players. As a result, rugby has matured into a harder, safer and more entertaining game for both player and spectator.

Consequently, recently involved in international rugby, such as Argentina, need to catch up to this "less dirty" rugby etiquette. Mendon should be prosecuted for assault or at least given a one-year suspension. The consequence of his bad behaviour would send a message to up-and-coming players and encourage a fully expected higher standard for the future.

Yours faithfully, ROB THOMAS, 28 Upper Addison Gardens, Holland Park, W14.

Amateur status

From Mr F. W. Hudson

Sir, Mr Murray's free cigar after his Scottish rugby trial, with its threat to his amateur status (Sports Letters, October 25), is a case of enjoyable days in course of jeopardy. Our A team had a 25-stone prop, a commercial traveller in sweats, not very tall but surprisingly dippy for his size.

A firm of sports outfitters wanted to give him a free pair of shorts. He was to be photographed for an advertisement as the fastest man playing rugby. The poor chap was terribly disappointed to be told that this would be a flagrant act of professionalism for which he would be banned for life.

I am, sir, your obedient servant, T. F. H. HUDSON, 7 Orchard Green, Chilton Foliat, Hungerford, Berkshire.

On the right golf course

From Mr Clive Harrison and Mr John Nelson

Sir, The efforts being made to meet the present and forecast unmet demand for more golf courses seem to us to be misguided. Instead of seeking to create more private courses, they should be aimed at producing more pay-as-you-play courses.

It is, we suspect, this pay-as-you-play type of access to golf courses which is wanted by the vast majority of golfers who make up the bulk of the unsatisfied demand. These are the golfers who are not members of private golf clubs, play their golf at unsociable hours on municipal courses and/or pay exorbitant visiting fees to private clubs; and whose only chance of playing competitively is through belonging to a golfing society which gives them temporary unofficial handicaps.

The myth is that these golfers want to join private clubs. Not so. All they want is to play golf. They don't want the social cachet and expensive tr

7-5, 6-1.

